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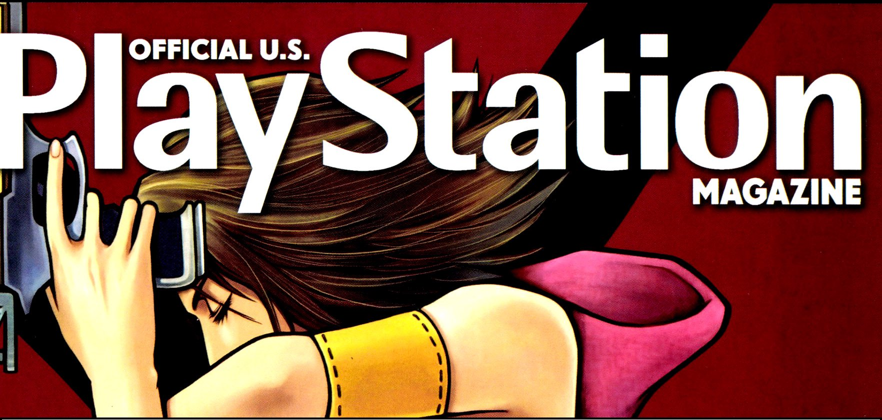

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 75 (December 2003)

## Final FANTASY X-2

demo · review · eternal calm

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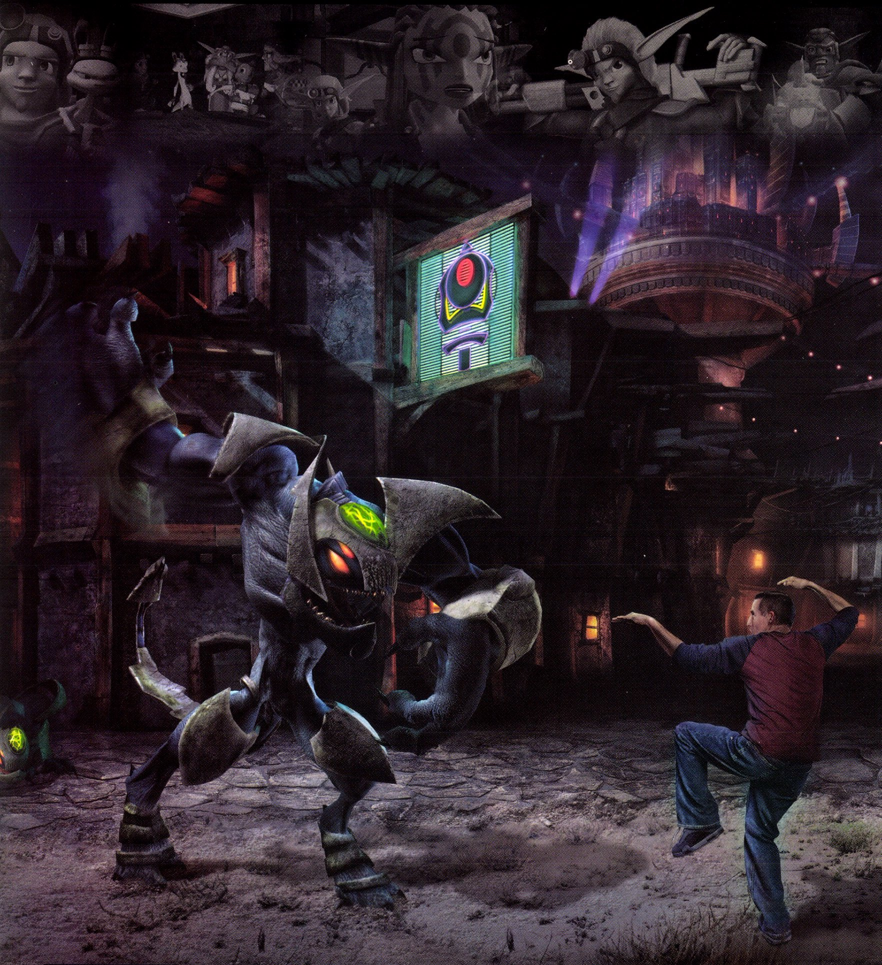

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

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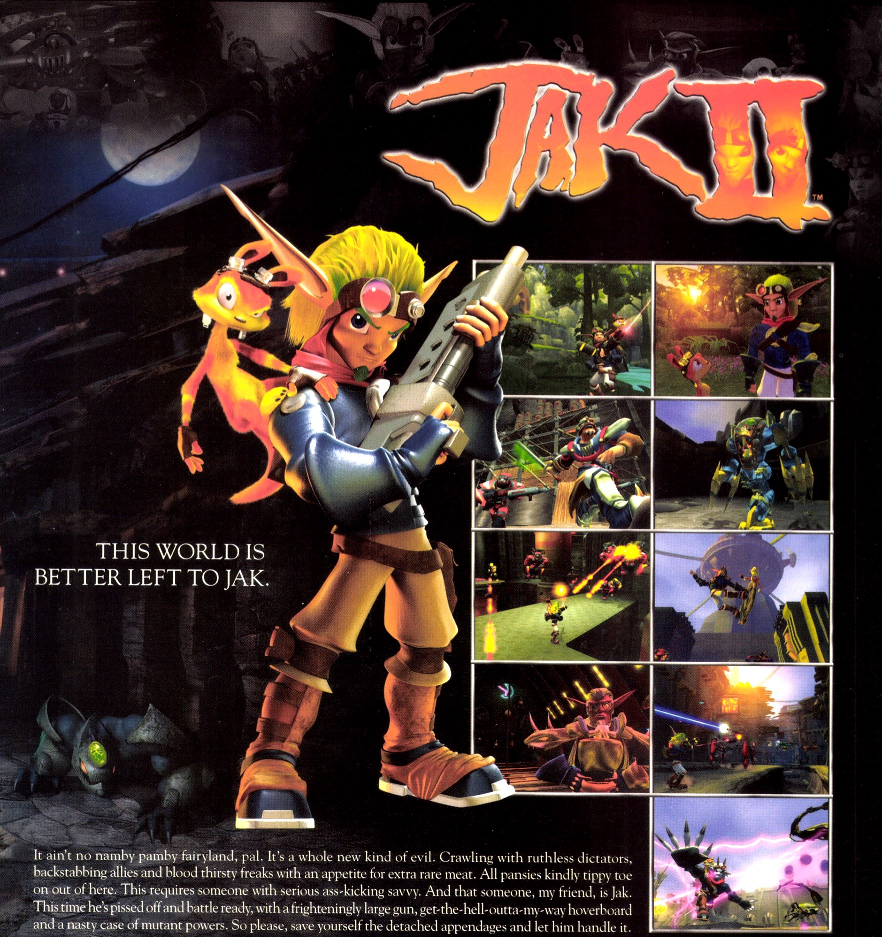

It ain't no namby pamby fairyland, pal. It's a whole new kind of evil. Crawling with ruthless dictators, backstabbing allies and blood thirsty freaks with an appetite for extra rare meat. All pansies kindly tippy toe on out of here. This requires someone with serious ass-kicking savvy. And that someone, my friend, is Jak. This time he's pissed off and battle ready, with a frighteningly large gun, get-the-hell-outta-my-way hoverboard and a nasty case of mutant powers. So please, save yourself the detached appendages and let him handle it.

NAUGHTY DOG

PlayStation 2

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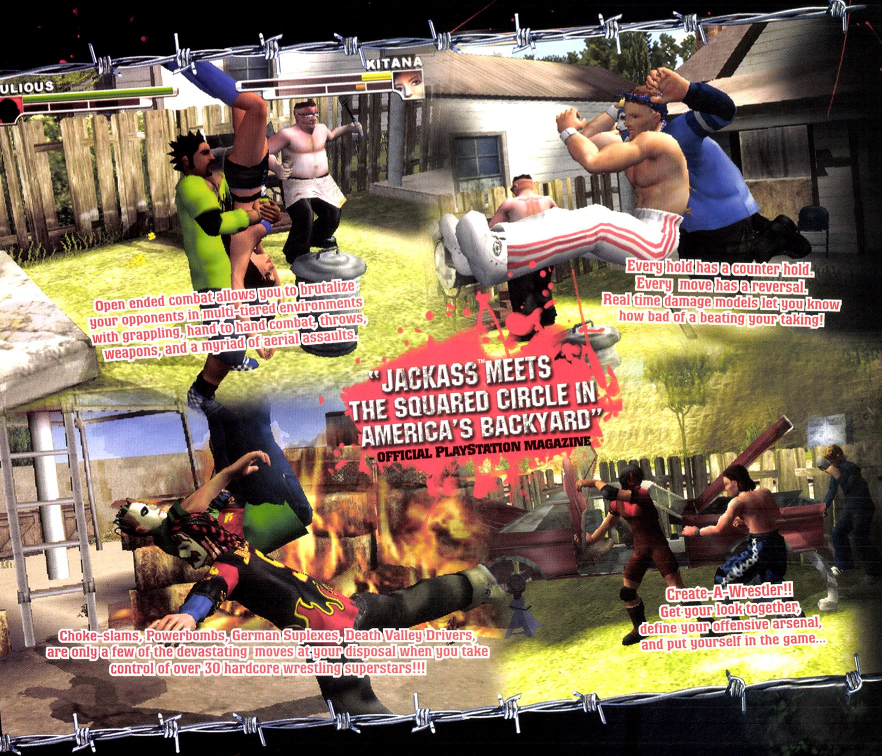
## "ENVIRONMENTS AS INTERACTIVE AS A LEVEL OF TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER"

- PLAYBOY



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- OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

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- HIT PARADER MAGAZINE

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Blood
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Mature Sexual Themes
Strong Language

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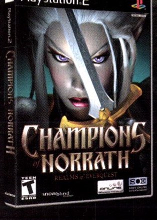

"EverQuest + Baldur's Gate = Awesome"
— OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

"With a feature set this deep, this may indeed be the new champion of action RPGs." — PSM

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PlayStation 2

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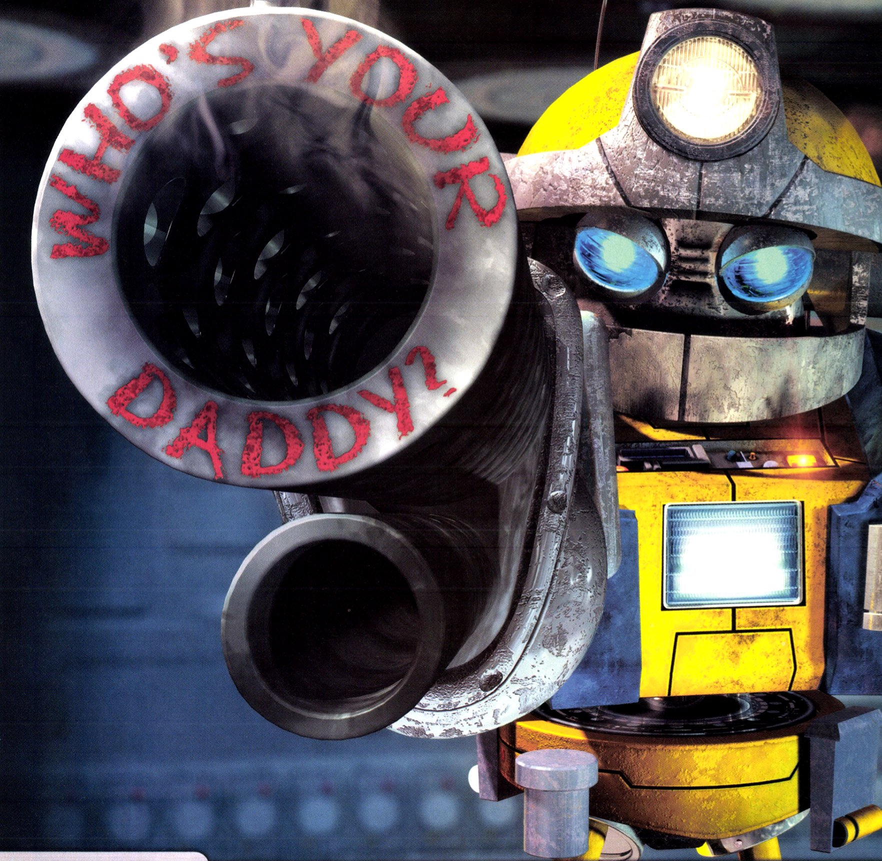

**ARSENAL**

S.P.E.W.

MINING LASER

RIVET GUN

SLINGSHOT

SCATTER BLASTER

RIPPER

CLEANER

TOASTER

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Strong Language
Violence

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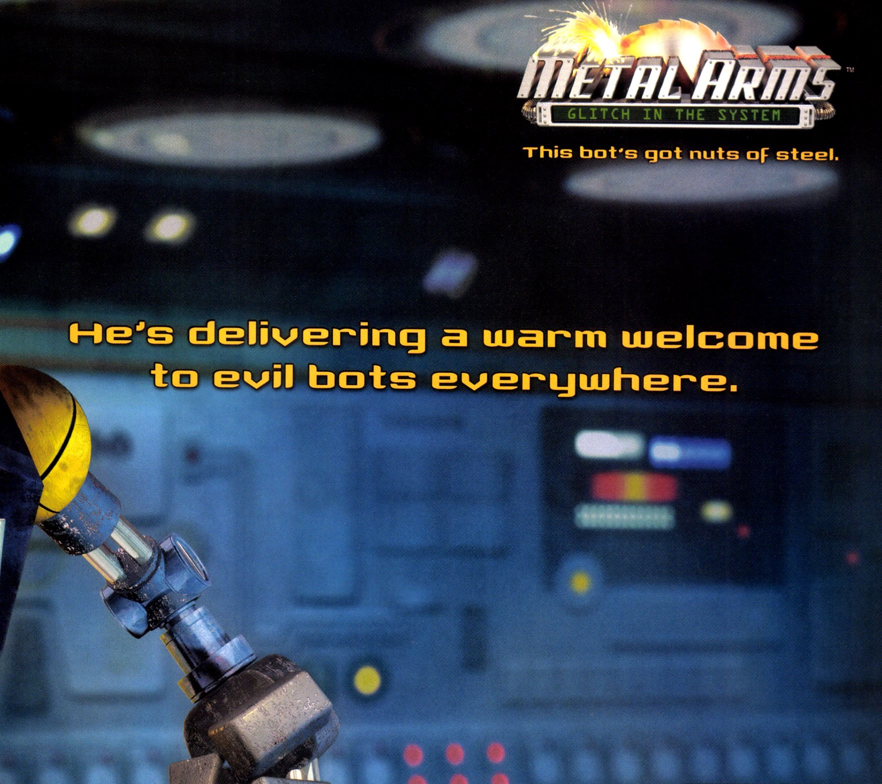

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PlayStation 2

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Violence

PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE

*INTERNET CONNECTIVITY required. Online game play available for the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system only. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately).

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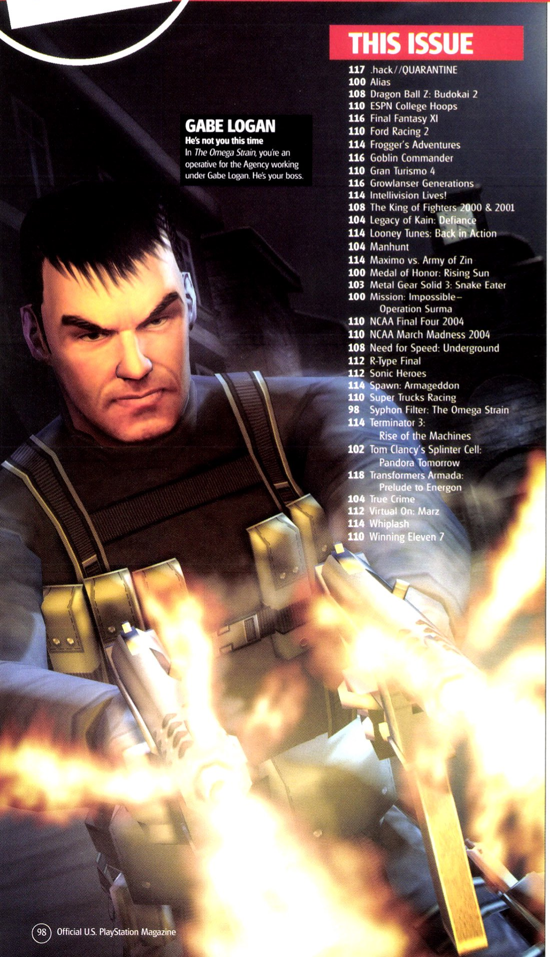
# PREVIEWS

Gabe Logan's favorite section.



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**GABE LOGAN**

**He's not you this time**

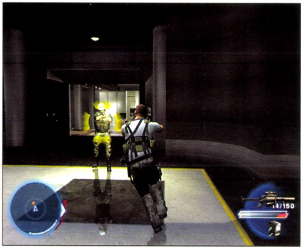
In *The Omega Strain,* you're an operative for the Agency working under Gabe Logan. He's your boss.

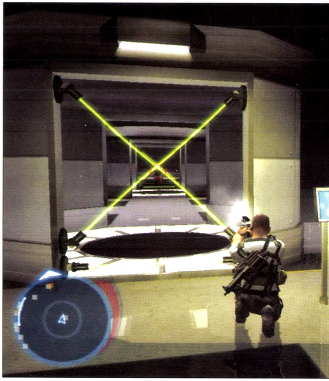
# SYPHON FILTER
## THE OMEGA STRAIN

### Infecting us with innovative online play

With the last three games having sold about a bajillion units between them (OK, closer to 3 million), it's no surprise that *Syphon Filter* is making the leap to PS2. So far, *The Omega Strain* looks like it'll be worth the wait. The most fascinating feature is the unique cooperative gameplay. Up to four players can team up online in nine of the 17 levels you'd play by yourself offline; in fact, you can actually add players to your single-player campaign on the fly. There's a real benefit to having extra help, too: Certain areas are accessible only when two or more players team up—one teammate offers another a boost to a high ledge, for example. You can access some secrets (like weapon upgrades) in this manner—they'll help personalize your in-game character.

**Publisher:** Sony CEA **Developer:** Sony Bend **Release Date:** February

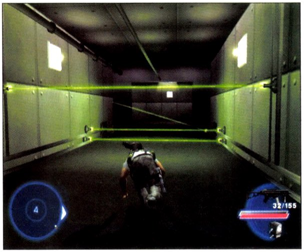


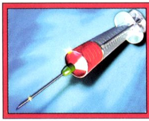


110
VROOM!
Any car you want
*GT4* is the ultimate racer.

112
ZOOM!
Sonic speeds over to PS2!
Team up in *Sonic Heroes*.

114
SWISH!
Maximo slices and dices
The Army of Zin is toast.

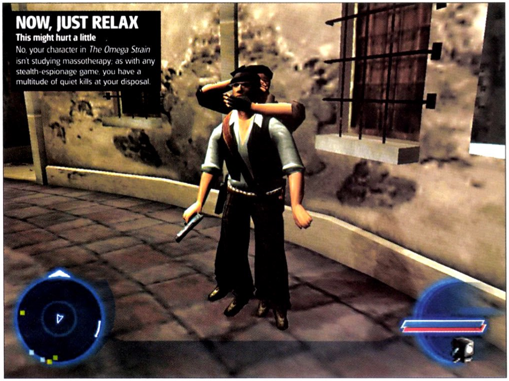




## SYPHON WHAT?

**Who got filtered?**

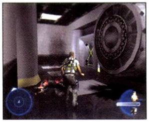
So just what the hell does "Syphon Filter" mean? Well, nothing really. It's a code name for a bioengineered fatal virus that can be targeted at specific demographics. The Omega Strain, then, is a particular variety of the Syphon Filter virus. Got it?

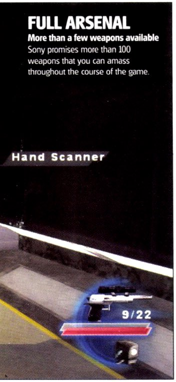


## NOW, JUST RELAX

**This might hurt a little**

No, your character in *The Omega Strain* isn't studying massotherapy; as with any stealth-espionage game, you have a multitude of quiet kills at your disposal.

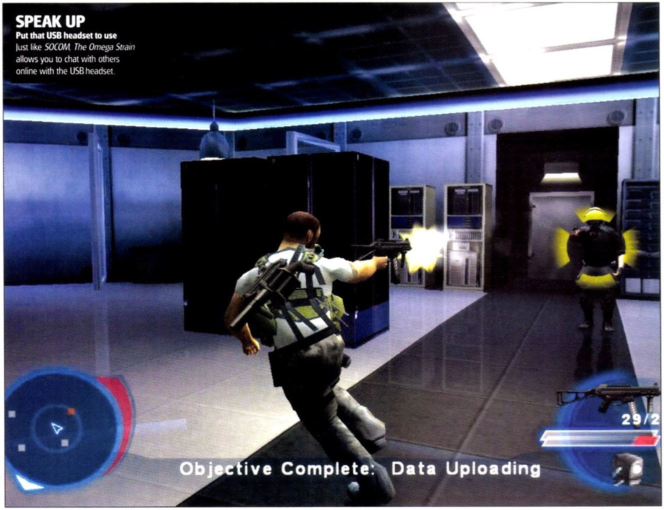




## FULL ARSENAL

**More than a few weapons available**

Sony promises more than 100 weapons that you can amass throughout the course of the game.



## SPEAK UP

**Put that USB headset to use**

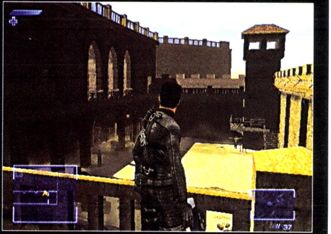
Just like *SOCOM*, *The Omega Strain* allows you to chat with others online with the USB headset.

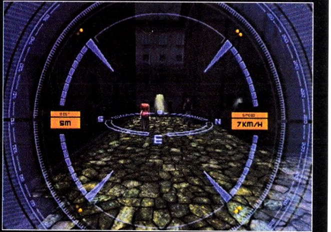
**DID YOU KNOW?**
Pearl Harbor is so named because of the pearl oysters that once grew in its waters.

## ALIAS

We love the alternative to radar presented in the stealthy moments of *Alias*. When Sydney tries to pick a lock, the screen splits and shows her working away in one view, while the other screen reveals an incoming guard. This adds an interesting level of visual tension to traditional stealth puzzles. Even better, Sydney (voiced by Jennifer Garner) gets to wear the same hot costumes you see on the show.

**Publisher:** Acclaim **Developer:** Acclaim Studios Cheltenham **Release Date:** December





## MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE–OPERATION SURMA

Want to pilot a tiny, mechanical, insectile spy device armed with a camera and a bomb? Want to swing from the rafters on a super-strong grappling line? Want to swap faces as frequently as most people change their socks? If so, *Operation Surma* is for you. It may not be as true to life as the *Tom Clancy* games, but *Splinter Cell* fans will definitely find plenty to like in *Surma*'s stealth-based gameplay.

**Publisher:** Atari **Developer:** Paradigm **Release Date:** December

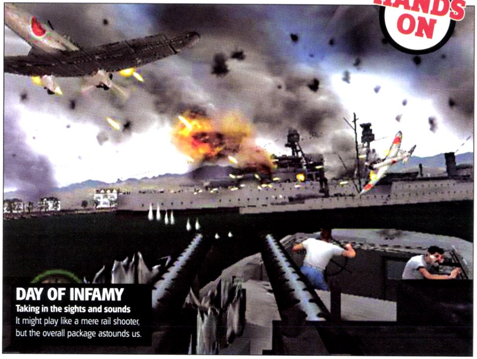
# MEDAL OF HONOR
## RISING SUN

### A total World War II experience

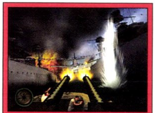
Actually playing the Pearl Harbor sequence—as opposed to watching it—reconfirms something we've always felt: *Rising Sun* is less of a game and more of an experience. Even without a 5.1 speaker setup and a huge screen, the chaotic crashes of all the Zeros, their bombs, gunfire, and the crazy motion blurring and camera shaking make for an extremely immersive experience. Missions in the Pacific Theater are more challenging, since many of them take place in the jungle. So not only do you have to deal with swaying grass and hills that can easily hide troops, but you also have smarter soldiers to fight against. Camouflaged Japanese troops are craftier (they even pop outta secret holes) and are not afraid to charge and bayonet you.

**Publisher:** EA Games **Developer:** EA Los Angeles **Release Date:** December

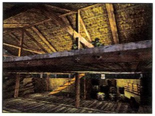
**HANDS ON**



**DAY OF INFAMY**
**Taking in the sights and sounds**
It might play like a mere rail shooter, but the overall package astounds us.



**ONWARD HO!**
**Band of brothers**
Many of the missions involve you and a whole buncha other soldiers. Since you're already taking on the Imperial Army with an A.I. buddy, you might as well load up the co-op mode and play with a real friend. Or you can just play against him in deathmatch online.



# THE THRILL OF SINGING MEETS THE AGONY OF DEFEAT.

# Karaoke Revolution™

When it comes to singing, you may already be a winner. Find out with the first karaoke video game that actually judges your vocal talents. Karaoke Revolution™ turns you into a star and your PlayStation®2 into an interactive karaoke machine, complete with scoring, training and a built-in audience.

Sing along with 35 hit songs, including chart-toppers popularized by **Michelle Branch, R.E.M., Avril Lavigne, Nickelback, Barenaked Ladies** and more. It's the ultimate party game with multiplayer for up to 8 of your friends, so step up to the mic and discover how well you carry a tune. And just how much fun agony can be.

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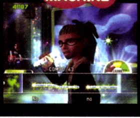
COMBO: 29

**MAKES YOUR PLAYSTATION®2 A KARAOKE MACHINE**



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PlayStation®2

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Mild Violence
Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes

PlayStation.2 NAUGHTY DOG

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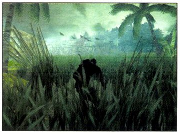
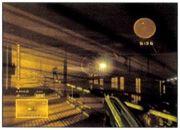
# SPLINTER CELL
## PANDORA TOMORROW
### Work alone–with the help of others

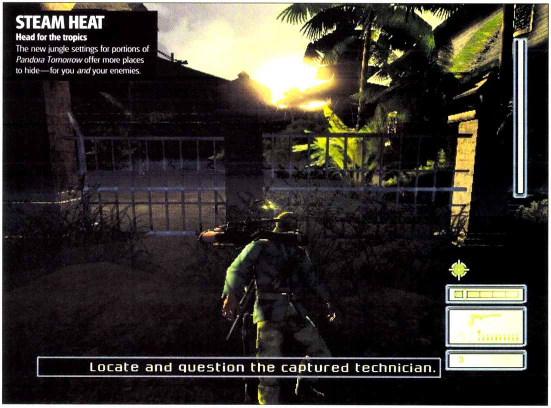
You are Sam Fisher. You are a splinter cell. You operate at the highest levels of secrecy. You...play well with others?

It sounds wrong, somehow, but teamwork plays a role in the sequel to the game of stealth espionage that rocked our world earlier this year. Although the the single-player, lone-wolf campaign remains *Pandora Tomorrow*'s main focus, the addition of online play allows multiple players to operate together in the day-after-tomorrow Clancyverse. Details remain sketchy; we're not sure how many simultaneous players the game supports, nor whether you can play through the main game with the help of others (as in *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*). We do know, however, that having other people creeping around with you adds a whole new dimension to the game. And, of course, the differences in the single-player game—most notably the lush, tropical environments you see here—will undoubtedly make *Pandora Tomorrow* a vastly different game from the original.

**Publisher:** Ubisoft **Developer:** Ubisoft **Release Date:** March



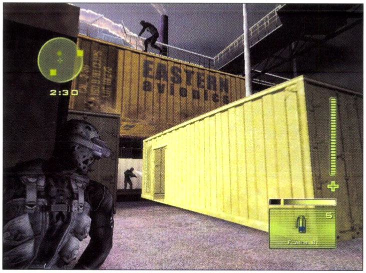


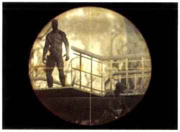


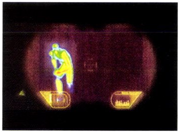
**STEAM HEAT**

**Head for the tropics**

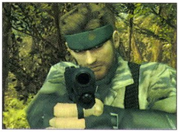
The new jungle settings for portions of *Pandora Tomorrow* offer more places to hide—for you *and* your enemies.

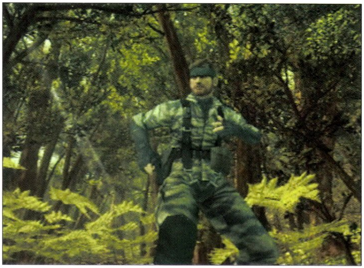


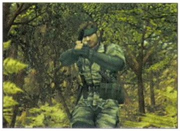




**500** Approximate population of the endangered American crocodile in North America. Conversely, our continent features around 1.5 million alligators.





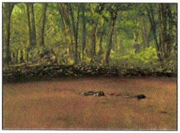


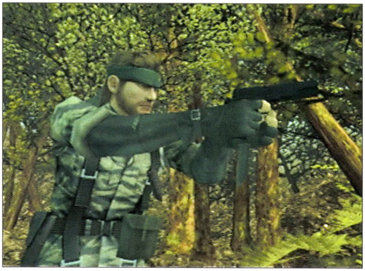
# METAL GEAR SOLID 3
## SNAKE EATER

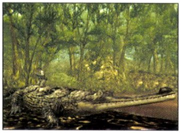
### Snakes never tasted so good

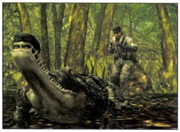
There's not much in the way of new details on *Snake Eater*, but we do have a tasty batch of new screenshots fresh from both the Tokyo Game Show and London's ECTS. Looks pretty sweet, huh? Well, there's still a year of waiting.

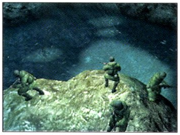
**Publisher:** Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** November 2004

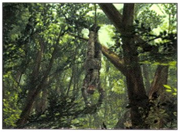


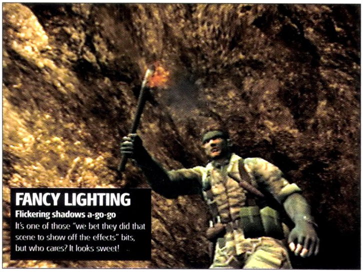












**FANCY LIGHTING**

**Flickering shadows a-go-go**

It's one of those "we bet they did that scene to show off the effects" bits, but who cares? It looks sweet!

...LIKE WE
KNOW JAK
TAKE YOUR GAME FURTHER
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JAK II
OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE
BY GREG OFF
PlayStation 2
In a vast world, we'll be your guide.
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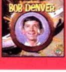


**YOU'RE A REALLY SICK BASTARD IF...**
...you find *Manhunt* funnier than episode 86 of *Gilligan's Island,* also based on "The Most Dangerous Game."

## LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE

Among the *Legacy of Kain* series' best features has always been the way each game reimagines the world of Nosgoth. *Defiance* is no exception, offering yet another interpretation of the events from the previous games. You'll encounter plenty of familiar faces—Moebius, Vorador, The Elder God, and even Janos Audron (you know, the blue dude with wings) are all expected to make appearances.

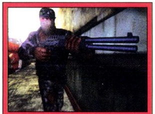
**Publisher:** Eidos **Developer:** Crystal Dynamics **Release Date:** December

## TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF L.A.

As you may have guessed from his rude interruption of last month's *True Crime* conversation, Snoop Dogg has indeed recorded an original song for Activision's attempt at the *Grand Theft Auto* formula. The soundtrack features a who's who of West Coast rap, from Westside Connection to Young Billionaires—more than 50 brand-new tracks. If you're into rap, that's a big deal. If not, well...don't those environments look lovely?

**Publisher:** Activision **Developer:** Luxoflux **Release Date:** November

REC
TCR : 00:32:05:45



### DOGS OF WAR

**New gang, like we said**

Full of ex-soldiers, the group known as the Wardogs is definitely the toughest challenge for Cash, whom you control in a modern-day snuff-film version of the classic short story "The Most Dangerous Game." Rockstar has even hinted that Cash might not be alone....

## MANHUNT

HANDS ON

### A most dangerous game

If there's any doubt in your mind that *Manhunt* will be one of the most violent games ever made, just wait till you see the downright squirmy Levels of Execution feature. After holding down Square, three arrows lock on to your victim. The length of time you hold down the button yields one of three execution styles: hasty, violent, or extreme—"extreme" as in using a glass shard to stab an adversary in the stomach multiple times, followed by several seconds of eye gouging. Yikes. Wanna go extreme with a baseball bat? Prepare for some decapitation.

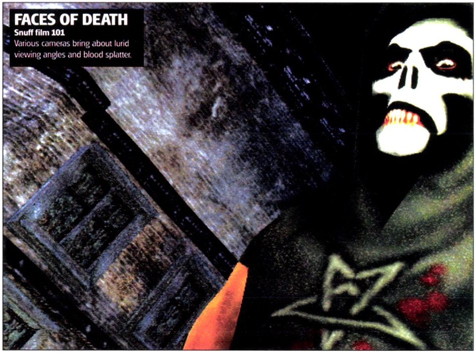
*Manhunt* controls very smoothly, with Square or X as your main attacks (they both perform the same executions in stealth mode, but you'll see different attacks in melee), Triangle to prop up against a wall, and Circle to fiddle with your inventory. Even with easy controls, the game still makes us a little sick to our stomachs. In a good way?

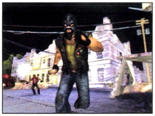
**Publisher:** Rockstar **Developer:** Rockstar North **Release Date:** November

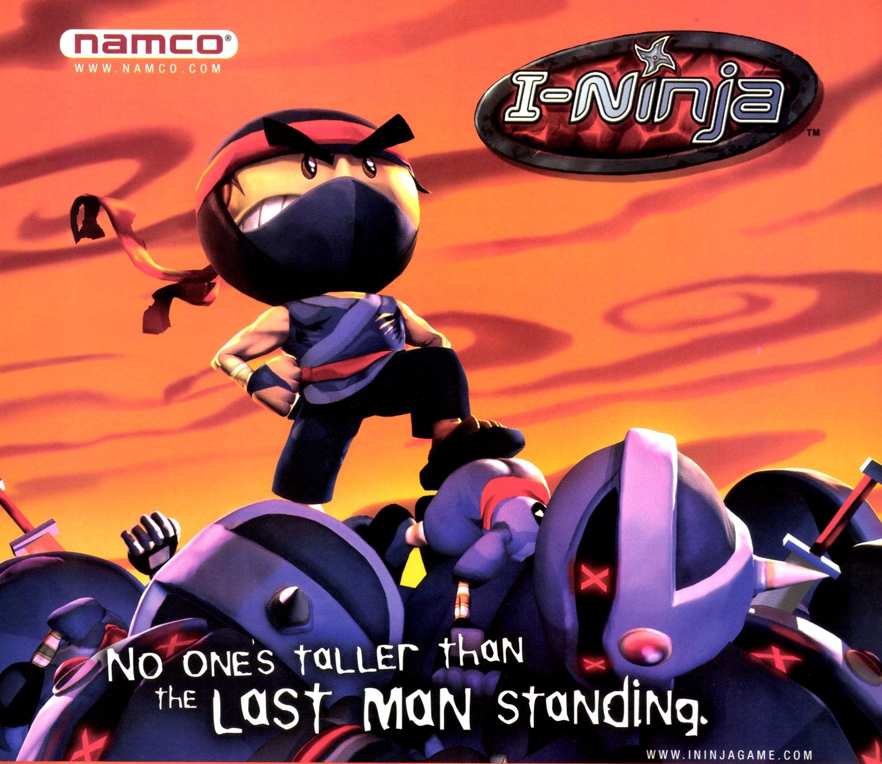
### FACES OF DEATH

**Snuff film 101**

Various cameras bring about lurid viewing angles and blood splatter.







Get Ninja-crazy by collecting power-ups to incite Ninja's special Rage abilities.

Gravity? Run up walls and tear through levels with moves only the most insane Ninja would try.

Use multiple weapons to take apart any foe that dares stand between Ninja and his missions.

Five huge worlds, mini-quests and grueling missions that will separate the Ninjas from the boys.

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood
Violence

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

XBOX

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In my quest
for redemption
Not even my
death

I COMMAND THE FORCES OF TIME.

Deceived by a treacherous Vizier, I was led to unleash the dark powers of the Sands of Time upon the Sultan's Kingdom. Now, as darkness consumes all in its path, my speed, agility, and skill as a warrior are not enough. I must learn to command the Sands to slow, freeze, accelerate, and even reverse time itself. If I fail to undo my fatal mistake, all shall perish with me. Mine is a fight for survival. . . not glory.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Blood
Violence
Suggestive Themes

PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

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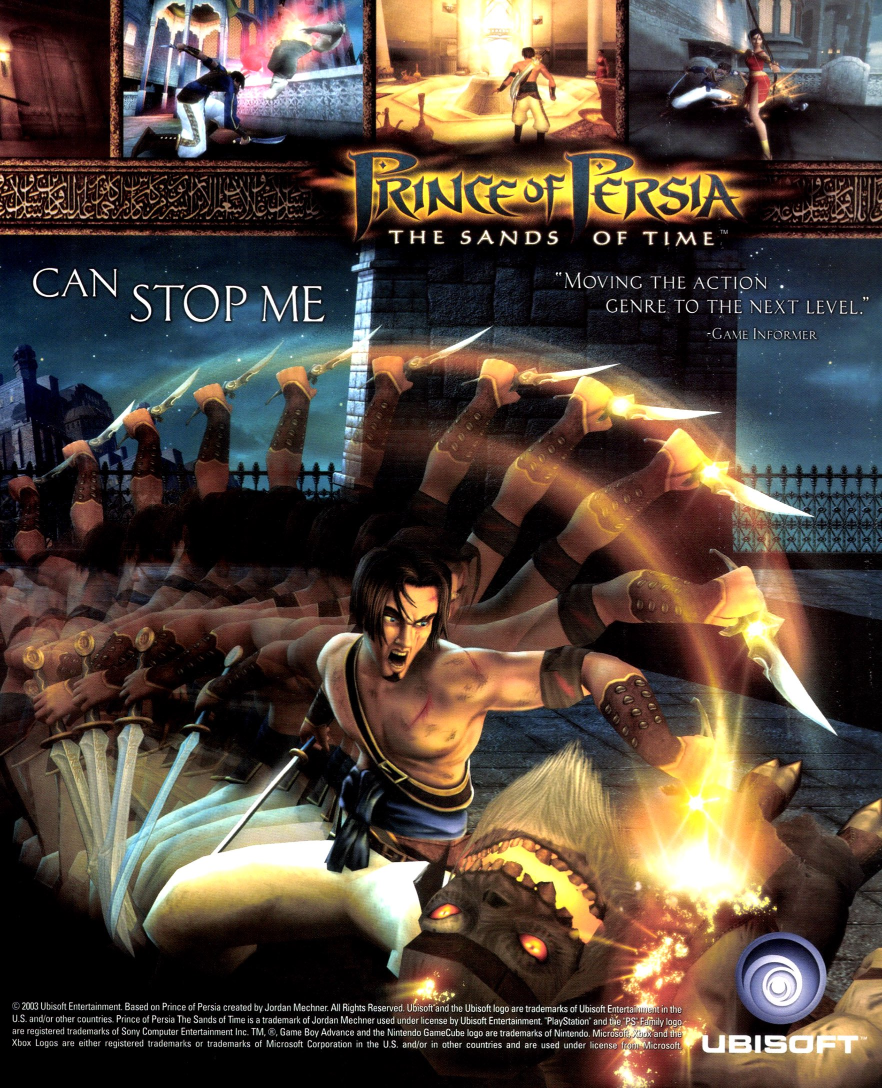
PRINCE OF PERSIA
THE SANDS OF TIME™
CAN STOP ME
"MOVING THE ACTION GENRE TO THE NEXT LEVEL."
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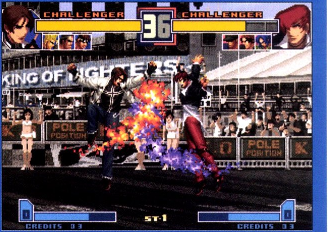
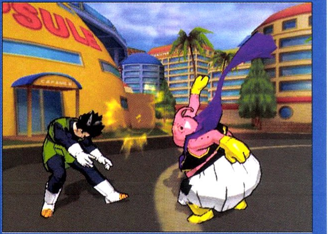
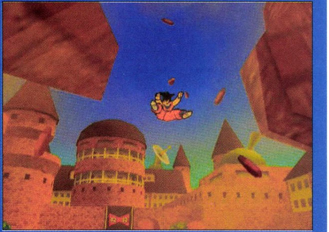


## THE KING OF FIGHTERS 2000 & 2001

Few companies would see it as good marketing to release a game at the end of 2003 that references the years 2000 and 2001 in its title. But SNK knows its fans wouldn't have it any other way. Encompassing two *King of Fighters* games, this compilation offers a ton of classic 2D-fighting action. Highlights include the series' first 3D backgrounds in *2001* and a mode in *2000* that rewards you with footage from old *King* games.

**Publisher:** SNK NeoGeo USA **Developer:** SNK **Release Date:** November





## DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI 2

We've played this game, and we *still* don't know who the heck anyone is or why they fight. Our lack of *DBZ* knowledge aside, *Budokai 2* feels like a very solid fighter. Our favorite feature (besides fusing two fighters into one)? The destructible environment. You can throw someone into a mountain and watch it crumble on him. It makes the fights that much more epic and over-the-top.

**Publisher:** Atari **Developer:** Dimps **Release Date:** December

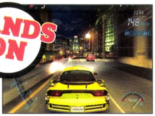
# NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

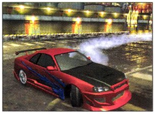
HANDS ON

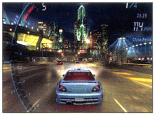
### Insert fast, furious reference here

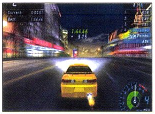
There's a lot to get excited about with *Need for Speed Underground*, and we're not saying that because it graced our cover a few months ago. It's not just that this is the most comprehensive PS2 simulation of the import tuning scene, nor that the graphics are gorgeous and produced with the help of an Oscar-nominated special-effects wiz. It's not just that it boasts every significant aftermarket parts manufacturer and every licensed vehicle you'd want to see in a game. It's not just that you can race online and even compete against players running the PC version of *Underground*. It's all this with a cool attitude (the *Need for Speed* franchise loosens up nicely), great tunes, and controls to die for. Stay tuned for our review next month...if you can wait that long.

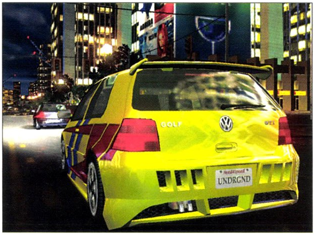
**Publisher:** EA Games **Developer:** EA Black Box **Release Date:** November

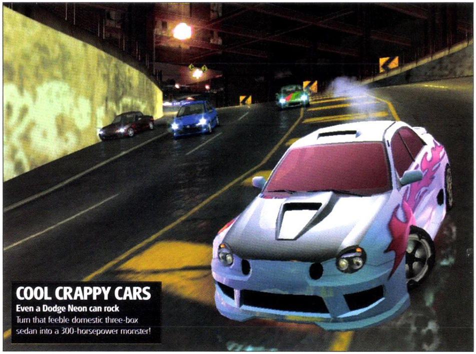








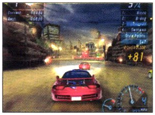


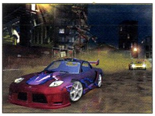


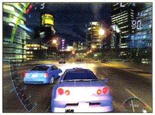
**COOL CRAPPY CARS**

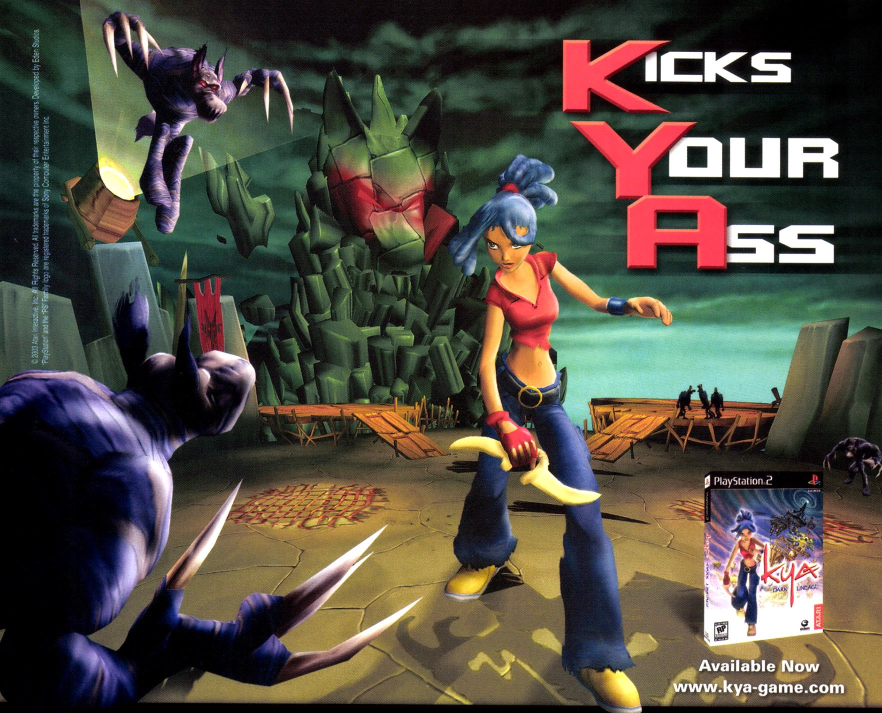
**Even a Dodge Neon can rock**

Turn that feeble domestic three-box sedan into a 300-horsepower monster!









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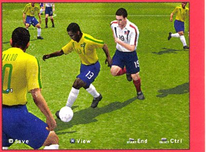
**55%** In 1916, the percentage of cars in the world that were Model T Fords—a record that has never been beaten.

### FORD RACING 2

**Publisher:** Empire
**Developer:** Razorworks
**Release Date:** December
Current frontrunner for Least Asked For Sequel of the Year, *Ford Racing 2* at least *seems* like a decent racer, including more than 30 Fords from over the decades.

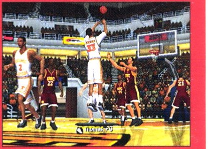
### SUPER TRUCKS RACING

**Publisher:** XS Games
**Developer:** Jester
**Release Date:** November
You know you've always wanted to slip into a Cat, Man, or Tatra semi truck as a guy with a name like Harri Luostarinen, Gerd Korber, or Ludovic Stern. Well, now you can.



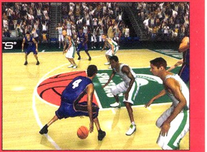
### WINNING ELEVEN 7

**Publisher:** Konami
**Developer:** Konami CE Tokyo
**Release Date:** February
How do you improve the best soccer game ever made? Try better graphics, more teams (now nearly 100), and six new stadiums. Too bad it won't be online.



### ESPN COLLEGE HOOPS

**Publisher:** Sega
**Developer:** Kush Games/VC
**Release Date:** November
Sega's ESPN-ification of sports titles continues with this fine game of NCAA b-ball. *Hoops* adds a solid dose of school spirit to an enhanced *NBA 2K2* engine.



### NCAA FINAL FOUR 2004

**Publisher:** Sony CEA
**Developer:** 989 Sports
**Release Date:** November
989 has totally redone the *Final Four* graphics engine for *2004*, so each of the 300-plus teams should look better than ever. A great online mode rounds out the package.

### NCAA MARCH MADNESS 2004

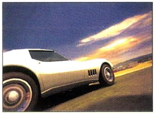
**Publisher:** EA Sports
**Developer:** NuFX
**Release Date:** November
Play Dynasty mode for 30 seasons as your favorite of more than 300 schools (150 more than *2003*), and hear Dick Vitale call every single game.

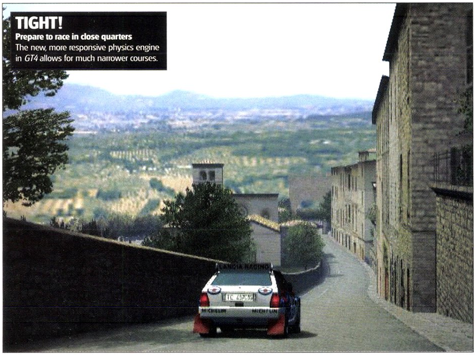
# GRAN TURISMO 4

## It's time to get really old school

When we heard that *Gran Turismo 4* will focus on the "history of the automobile," we joked that we'd end up racing Ford Model T's around modern courses. So, imagine our surprise at *GT* creator Kazunori Yamauchi's comments on what *GT4*'s oldest car would be: "Our intention is to represent the entire history of cars, so we hope to include the first cars ever made." This is just one example of the neat features that might—*might*—make it into the final game. Yamauchi confesses a desire to include some fantasy rides, for example, from autos that he designed (somewhat likely) to hidden cars from *Motor Toon GP*, Polyphony's cartoony PS1 racing game (less likely). There is also talk of circumventing the no-damage restriction by showing vehicles driving off cliffs (on the Grand Canyon track, for example), but not actually suffering damage. Right now, this is all just talk; expect more concrete info soon.

**Publisher:** Sony CEA **Developer:** Polyphony Digital **Release Date:** 2004...at some point

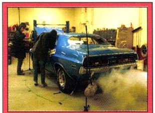




### TIGHT!

**Prepare to race in close quarters**

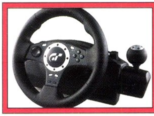
The new, more responsive physics engine in *GT4* allows for much narrower courses.



### SOUND OFF

**Vroom! Vrrrroooom! VRRRROOOOM!**

*GT4* is expected to include more than 500 cars. That's five *hundred* cars. And each one had to be painstakingly modeled, from basic appearance to truly hardcore elements. The team even recorded the sounds of the engine and the exhaust at different RPMs.



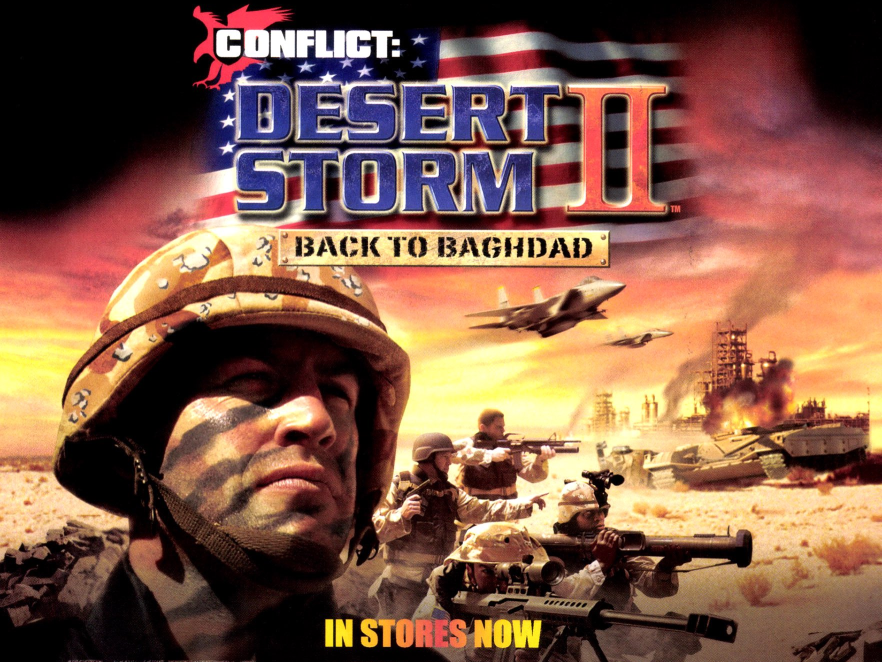
### DRIVE LIKE CRAZY

**A new game means a new controller**

Since Polyphony went back to the drawing board to revamp the *GT* physics engine, it asked Logitech to design a more realistic Driving Force wheel. Enter the Driving Force Pro, with a full 900 degrees of rotation (same as your car) and a stick shift. It rocks.

# FREEDOM WILL ENDURE

GOTHAM GAMES



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Blood

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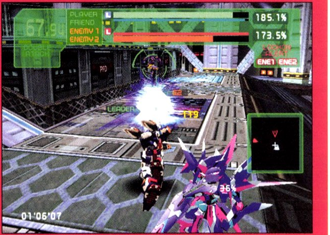
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

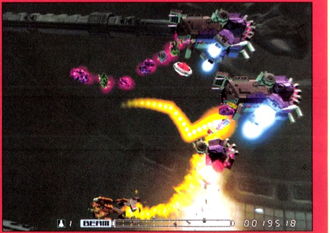
**2/92** Month of debut for Archie Comics' *Sonic* series, still going strong almost 12 years later.

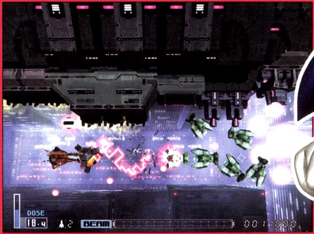


## VIRTUAL ON: MARZ

Fans of Sega's giant-robot fighting-game series will notice some interesting new features in *Virtual On: Marz*. The game not only offers more virtuaroids waging battle at a single time (usually two or three), but it also has a full Story mode that sheds some light on the conflict between the robot clans. There's even a Challenge mode, if you feel like testing your *Virtual On* skills in different situations.

**Publisher:** Sega **Developer:** Hitmaker **Release Date:** Fall





## R-TYPE FINAL

The old-school *R-Type* shooter series returns, brimming with color and with its best graphics ever. The various alien weirdies and their weapons serve as great eye candy, but the biggest feature has to be the 102 ships! You begin with a choice of a puny three, each with varying types of beams and add-ons. Progress further, though, and a plethora of new rides starts to fill your hangar.

**Publisher:** Eidos **Developer:** IREM **Release Date:** January

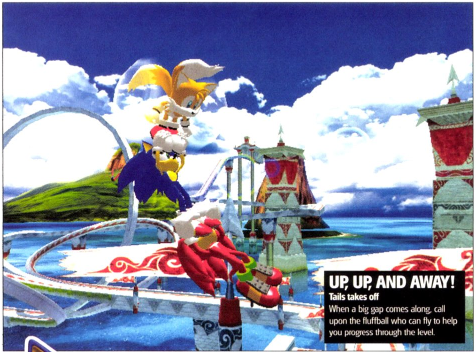
# SONIC HEROES

## Team up with Sega's blue boy

It's about freakin' time, huh? After nearly two years of developing games for other companies' systems, Sega is finally releasing a *Sonic* title on PS2. But *Sonic Heroes* isn't your typical platformer.

For this game, Yuji Naka and Sonic Team have given the franchise its biggest face-lift since the first *Sonic Adventure* on Dreamcast. The series' trademark lightning-quick gameplay returns, and this time includes a new teamwork element. Choose from five three-critter squads; each embarks on its own 14-level adventure en route to thwarting Dr. Eggman and his nefarious Metal Sonic. You literally control the whole team yourself, switching between characters on the fly. For instance, an obstacle confronting Team Sonic might require Knuckles' raw power to pass; then, another situation might require Tails' ability to fly or Sonic's blazing speed. Fun stuff.

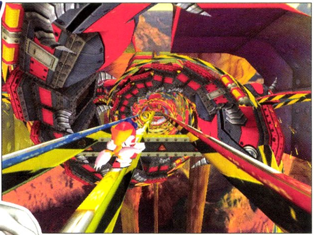
**Publisher:** Sega **Developer:** Sonic Team **Release Date:** January



### UP, UP, AND AWAY!

**Tails takes off**

When a big gap comes along, call upon the fluffball who can fly to help you progress through the level.



### WHO'S YOUR TEAM?

**You've got five to choose from**

**Team Sonic:** Sonic, Knuckles, Tails
**Team Chaotix:** Espio the Chameleon, Vector the Crocodile, Charmy the Bee
**Team Dark:** Shadow, Omega, Rouge
**Team Rose:** Amy Rose, Big the Cat, Cream
**Team Radical:** Spunkie, Bunkie, Ted

# from conception to reality

"GBA eat your heart out."
*Official XBOX Magazine July, 2003*

## introducing zodiac™

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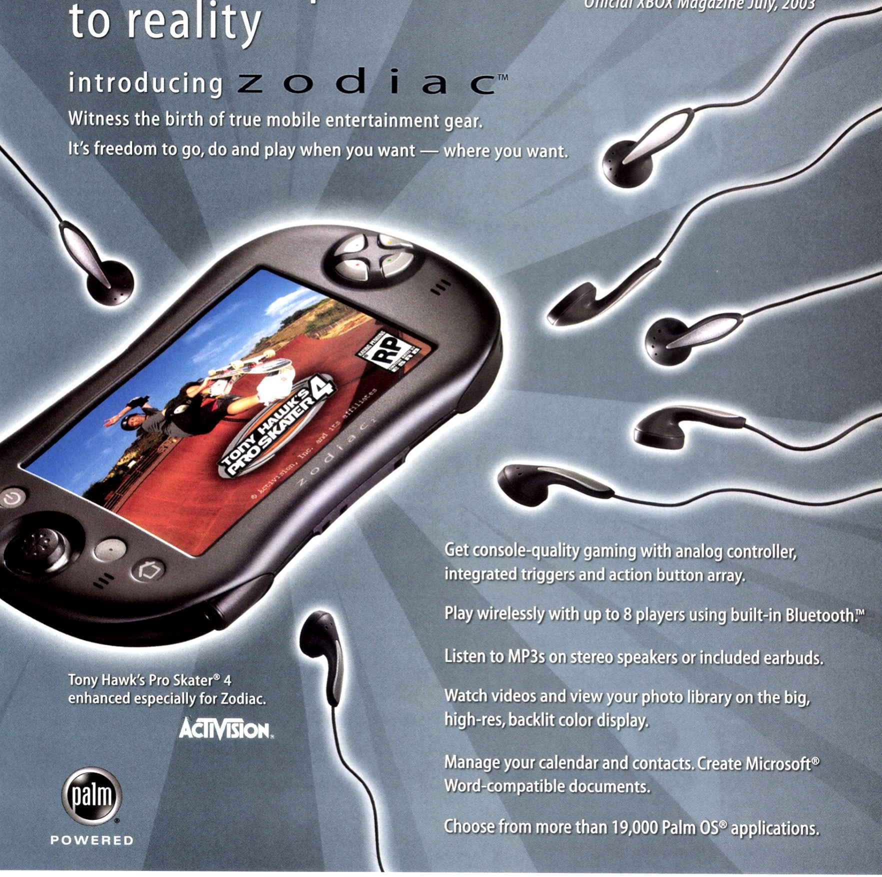

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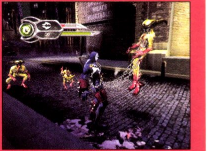
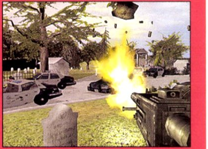
Maximo is baximo. Just like Frogger.

**LEADERSHIP** Arnold isn't the first gubernatorial candidate to star in a game: Gary Coleman is in the awful *Postal 2* (PC).

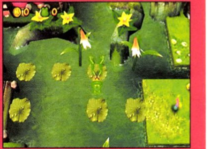
**SPAWN: ARMAGEDDON**
**Publisher:** Namco
**Developer:** Namco
**Release Date:** November
Here, you see Spawn snatching up a demon with his chains. You don't see him spilling its guts everywhere a second later. Would you expect anything less?



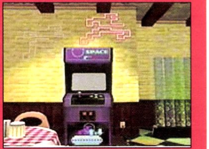
**TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES**
**Publisher:** Atari
**Developer:** Black Ops
**Release Date:** November
Adapting the movie it's named for to first-person-shooter form, *T3* is the first game ever to feature Arnold's likeness and voice.



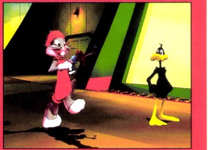
**FROGGER'S ADVENTURES: THE RESCUE**
**Publisher:** Konami
**Developer:** Konami CE Hawaii
**Release Date:** November
Konami takes the original green gaming icon back to his routes with a hop-o-riffic game for the young'uns. Four can play in multiplayer.



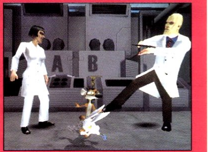
**INTELLIVISION LIVES!**
**Publisher:** Crave
**Developer:** Realtime Associates
**Release Date:** December
Enter Hal's Pizza (right) to play more than 60 early-'80s Intellivision games. Like *Activision Anthology*, this collection features unreleased titles and, better yet, commercials!

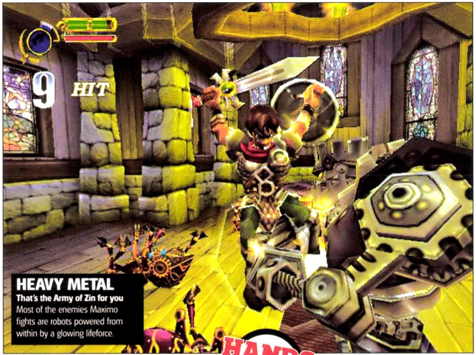


**LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION**
**Publisher:** EA Games
**Developer:** Warthog
**Release Date:** November
Switch between both Bugs and Daffy in a game that keeps in mind much of what makes the characters so popular... crossdressing included.



**WHIPLASH**
**Publisher:** Eidos
**Developer:** Crystal Dynamics
**Release Date:** November
We've played it. We like it. We want more of that crazy weasel Spanx and the bunny Redmond, whom Spanx flails around as a weapon. We review it next month.





**HEAVY METAL**
**That's the Army of Zin for you**
Most of the enemies Maximo fights are robots powered from within by a glowing lifeforce.

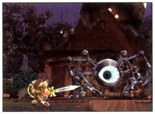
HANDS ON

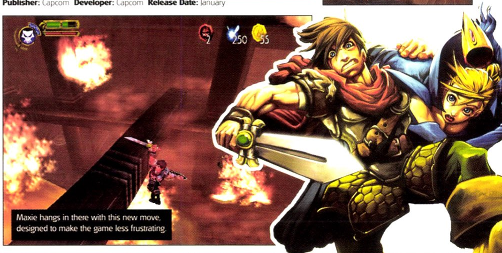
# MAXIMO VS. ARMY OF ZIN

## Keeping the good, fixing the bad

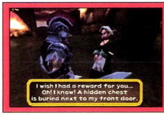
You might remember our mixed feelings about *Maximo: Ghosts to Glory*. On one hand, you had a great character starring in a beautiful game with solid 3D action; on the other, you had insane difficulty in which only the most hardcore of hardcore gamers finds any pleasure. For *Army of Zin*, expect everything you liked about the original to remain as solid as ever (the heroic act of saving townsfolk has been implemented, along with several new moves). Capcom has also done its best to keep things challenging, though not nearly as frustratingly hard as the previous game—you won't fall to your death nearly as often, for instance. You also get to keep everything you buy for the duration of a game. And yes, this includes specially powered boxers.

**Publisher:** Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** January





Maxie hangs in there with this new move, designed to make the game less frustrating.



I wish I had a reward for you... Oh! I know! A hidden chest is buried next to my front door.

### "MY HERO!"

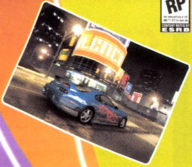
**Save the damsels, get a li'l somethin'**
One key new gameplay element is rescuing damsels in distress, which always results in them returning the favor. (No... not in *that* way!) Get your fair share of koins, armor boosts, and power-ups simply by saving innocent hotties.

### COMIC RELIEF

**A little suggested reading**
When you're not playing *Army of Zin*, this January, you might wanna set some time aside for the first issue of Dreamwave's monthly *Maximo* comic book. Look for the Alan Wang art you see above on the debut cover.

# REALITY?
# SOUNDS BORING.

## NOT YOUR ORDINARY GAME



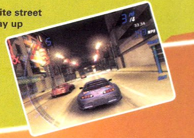
### NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

**PS2, XBX, GC**

If you ever long to enter the world of urban street racing and all its grit and glory, then the latest title in the Need for Speed series: Need for Speed Underground is just what you call for. Take on today's most popular tuner cars as you build the ultimate street machine by earning cash to pay for custom body kits and a host of car performance mods.

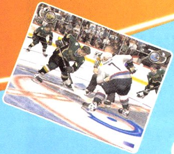
A number of diverse events set in rough, wet and sometimes nighttime settings make up the heart of street competition. You become a complete street racer only by perfecting skills in each event by means of nailing the perfect shift in drag racing and by putting your street cred on the line, racing through the city streets at all hours of the night.

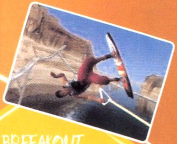
Prove you belong in the elite street racing circles, work your way up the underground rankings and take on the best of the best in each discipline.



## BREAK OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Nestlé
Butterfinger
bar





## SWEET CODES

### NHL HITZ PRO

**PS2, XBX, GC**

These codes are entered on the Select Teams screen. Press the button beside the USER prompt on your choose sides controller option, and use your controller to enter one of the following user names to unlock visual cheats:

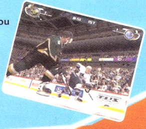
herk: (Player Head Mode) You can make the head size big or small.

ingy: (Team Head Mode) You can make the entire team's heads big or small.

211s: (Puck Size) You can make the puck size big or small.

sasg: (Puck Shadow) You can choose to put a shadow around the puck to make it more visible in the game.

carb: (Puck Glow) Every time you hit the puck, the puck will have a glowing trail mark on the end of it.



## BREAKOUT TRICKS

### WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED

**PS2, XBX, GC**

**Unlock More Boards**
At the main menu press Up, Up, Left, Left, Right, Right, Down, Down, Up, Left, Right, Down, Up, Left, Right, Down. The game will say "You got all the boards... Or did you?"

**Clear All Gaps**
At the main menu press R1, L1, L2, R2, R1, L1, L2, R2, R1, L1, L2, R2, R1, L1, L2, R2. The game will say "Wakeboarding Royalty."

**Unlock All Levels**
At the main menu press Square (4), Circle (4), Triangle (4), Square, Circle, Triangle. The game will say "Travel Visa Approved."

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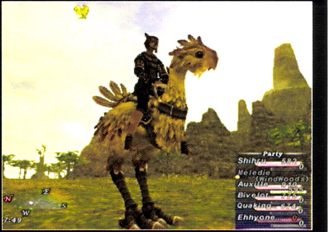
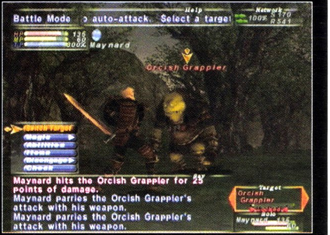
**DARE TO LOG ON TO BUTTERFINGER.COM**

**TRY THIS**

Can you quickly type the word *Growlanser* without spelling it "Growlancer" or "Growlanswer"? It's tough!



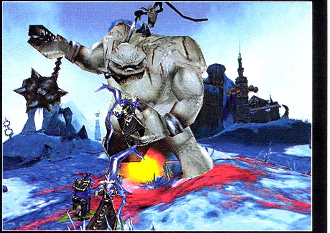


Maynard hits the Orcish Grappler for 25 points of damage.
Maynard parries the Orcish Grappler's attack with his weapon.
Maynard parries the Orcish Grappler's attack with his weapon.

## FINAL FANTASY XI

This month's *Final Fantasy XI* topic: transportation. As in previous *FF* games, you get the ability to range farther afield only with experience. In *FFXI*, you gain access to chocobos at level 20; once you earn a chocobo license, you can travel much faster, and enemies ignore you while you ride. Other transports include ferries and the inevitable airship—which you can use only at *very* high levels.

**Publisher:** Sony CEA **Developer:** Square Enix USA **Release Date:** March



## GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE

Emphasizing tactics over economy (and silly name over good name), *Goblin Commander* is a real-time strategy that lets players focus on...well, goblin commanding (and conquering). You directly control units and lead the charge using character classes like the massive Titan (the *OPM* favorite), or order their minions to lead it for you.

**Publisher:** Jaleco **Developer:** Jaleco **Release Date:** December

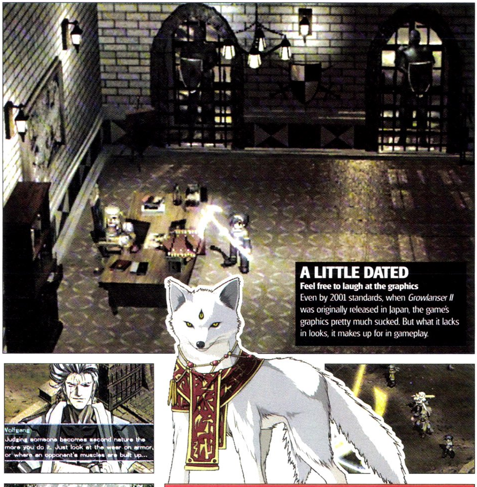
# GROWLANSER GENERATIONS

**HANDS ON**

### Working Designs 'ansers the call

Working Designs may not have published anything in ages, but this upcoming collection of *Growlanser II* and *III* makes a strong bid to move the company back up the RPG heap. These are some fine strategy games that might never have seen the light of day outside Japan, if not for WD. If nothing else, the *Growlanser* games are novel simply for their strategy-style gameplay without the use of isometric grids. You can move wherever you want on the battlefield while keeping an eye on the relative position of friends and foes through a radar in the upper right. Other cool touches include the ability to define the hero's personality through dialogue options, full-screen character portraits, and dynamic, event-filled encounters.

**Publisher:** Working Designs **Developer:** Career Soft **Release Date:** Early 2004



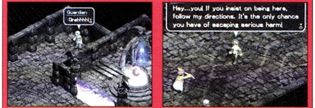
### A LITTLE DATED

**Feel free to laugh at the graphics**

Even by 2001 standards, when *Growlanser II* was originally released in Japan, the game's graphics pretty much sucked. But what it lacks in looks, it makes up for in gameplay.

Wolfgang

Judging someone becomes second nature the more you do it. Just look at the wear on armor, or where an opponent's muscles are built up...



Guardian

Grahhhh!

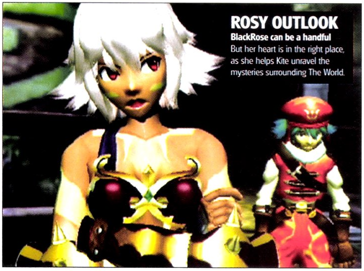
Hey...you! If you insist on being here, follow my directions. It's the only chance you have of escaping serious harm!

### THE DYNAMICS OF AN ENCOUNTER

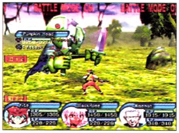
**Strategy on several levels**

Battles in the *Growlanser* games always seem straightforward at first, but they tend to go awry before too long. Here (left), early in *Growlanser II*, you enter a ruin to investigate a recent monster infestation when a couple of Yurgs confront you. But that's before this guy starts closing the walls in...and right after that (right), one of your inept admirers comes onto the scene—so you've gotta escort him to safety while you're racing the clock to escape the narrowing corridor. And this is one of *Growlanser II*'s simpler situations!

**IF YOU LIKE THE .hack ANIME...**
Try *Noir*, a stylish series starring two young female assassins. It was created by some of the same team behind *.hack*.



**ROSY OUTLOOK**
**BlackRose can be a handful**
But her heart is in the right place, as she helps Kite unravel the mysteries surrounding The World.


BATTLE MODE ON
Pumpkin Road
Kite
BlackRose
Mistral
1305/1305
220/220
1458/1458
220/220
1915/1915
340/340

# .hack//QUARANTINE

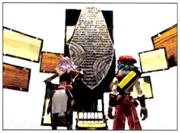
## Time to save The World

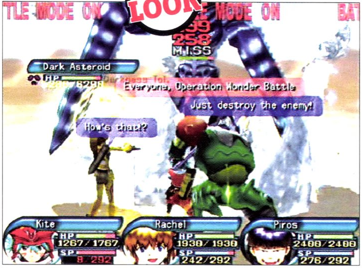
Fans have devoted months of time to the *.hack* phenomenon, and the four-part simulated massively multiplayer online RPG (which, as you likely already know, is neither massively multiplayer nor online) is soon to conclude. So, what's new with *Quarantine*? Not a whole lot—it's basically more of the same stuff you've grown to love over the past three installments, kicked up to the highest (and most challenging) level yet. That means you'll have to employ all kinds of advanced combat strategies, both for yourself and your party members. Be sure to take advantage of the new weaponry and new chat functions, both of which will be essential for survival. It's gonna get rough, but that's what it takes to save the world—both offline and online.

So, what to do while you're waiting for this February release? Have you tried raising all the grunty types? Or winning all the grunty races? Exploring all the hidden dungeons? Have you run into all the character cameos from the *.hack* anime? In any case, don't forget to keep your save files from part 3, so you're prepared for the mayhem that'll ensue!

**Publisher:** Bandai **Developer:** CyberConnect2 **Release Date:** February

FIRST LOOK




BATTLE MODE ON
99
258
MISS
Dark Asteroid
HP 2??/6288
Kite
HP 1267/1767
SP 8/292
Rachel
HP 1930/1930
SP 242/292
Piros
HP 2400/2400
SP 276/292

Everyone, Operation Wonder Battle

Just destroy the enemy!

How's that?

☑ LANCER
☑ LAVA GUN
☑ PLASMA STORM
☑ GRAVITY BOMB
☑ RYNO II
TAKE YOUR GAME FURTHER BRADYGAMES
OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE
Ratchet & Clank Going Commando
☑ YOUR ULTIMATE WEAPON
The Official Strategy Guide from BradyGames
TEEN Mild Violence
BRADYGAMES TAKE YOUR GAME FURTHER
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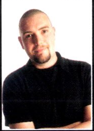
# FINAL FANTASY SPOOGEATHON



**John Davison**
**Editor-in-Chief**

## We go absolutely Squenix crazy

If you're not a *Final Fantasy* fan already, I think we'll have you converted by the time you're done with this issue. Not only do we have the first review of the game (you'll only find that here in the *Official PlayStation Magazine* this month), we also have an exclusive playable demo of the game on our DVD (you won't find that anywhere else either), and the exclusive *Eternal Calm* movie which gives an insight into the events that take place between *Final Fantasy X* and its sequel. We're particularly proud of having this movie on our disc, as it was previously only available in Japan and you *FF* geeks won't be able to see it in English anywhere else in the world. You can't buy it, you can't download it from the Web, and it's not bundled with the new game as a bonus feature either. Sit back and enjoy it, and let it be a taster for future "visual content" that we'll see from Square in the coming months.

If all this isn't enough to get you pumped up on Square goodies, we also have news on *Kingdom Hearts II* and *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*, too.

Don't care about Square games? Well, we have tons of other good stuff too.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

### JASON & HEATHER MARTIN

Jason and Heather put together a neato-keen mix of pinup and anime. You'll find their luscious art featured prominently in our Holiday Buyers' Guide this month, and you can find more at their rockin' website. www.artplaymix.com

### JOHN SCALZI

John's new book, *The Book of the Dumb*, is out on store shelves right now. Which means you should go buy it. Yes, right now. What are you still doing here? Do you think we're kidding when we say stuff like this? Go! www.scalzi.com

### GREG SEWART

You know that Scorpions song "Rock You Like a Hurricane"? Well, Sewart got rocked this month when Juan smashed into Nova Scotia. But that didn't stop him from reviewing *Space Channel 5* and *Star Trek* for us. Is that dedication, or what?

### DAVE SMITH

Dave is hardcore. He knows more about anime than anyone we know. Plus, he's one of the intrepid new Internet Adventurers working for Sam. He wrote our *Gundam* review and does our anime column. www.1up.com

## Videogames Have Ratings, Just Like Movies

The Entertainment Software Rating Board provides information about videogame content. ESRB ratings are intended as guidelines only; parents should still monitor minors' purchases.

WWW.ESRB.ORG

**EARLY CHILDHOOD RATING** Deemed suitable for children 3 or older. Products carrying this label have absolutely no material that would be considered inappropriate by parents.

**EVERYONE RATING** The E replaced the previous K-A rating last year. Suitable for kids ages 6 and up, E-rated games may contain minimal violence or crude language.

**TEEN RATING** Contains suggestive themes; mild or strong language; and animated violence. Some parents may want to supervise children playing T-rated games.

**MATURE RATING** These games contain more adult themes, such as blood and gore; stronger language; and sexual themes. Deemed not suitable for those under 17.

**ADULTS ONLY RATING** The extreme of the ratings, suitable for adults only. Packs sexual themes and extreme violence. Console manufacturers have yet to allow an AO-rated game.

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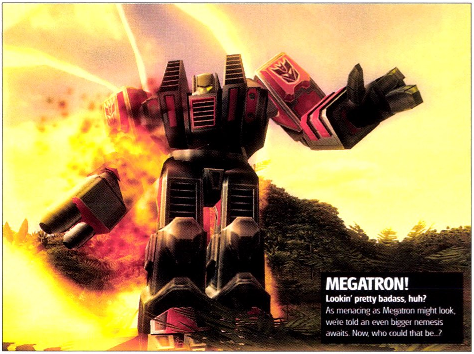
## PUSH 'EM BACK

Two of fall's most anticipated games, *Champions of Norrath* and *Everything or Nothing*, have been pushed to early 2004.

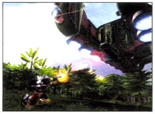


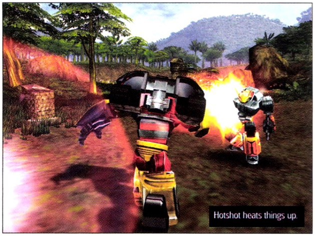
**MEGATRON!**
**Lookin' pretty badass, huh?**
As menacing as Megatron might look, we're told an even bigger nemesis awaits. Now, who could that be...?

# TRANSFORMERS ARMADA
## PRELUDE TO ENERGON
### We like what meets our eye

We all know the Transformers are more than meets the eye—if the Transformers *game* fits that description as well, then we're in for a big treat with *Prelude to Energon*. Just look at these shots! Sure, the game is based on the new *Armada* style (Mini-Con enhancements and all), but Melbourne House assures us the abysmal Cartoon Network TV show is just a starting point—Optimus and the boys have much more in common with the Dreamwave comic series. Play as three different Autobots and transform whenever you feel like it en route to thwarting the Decepticons.

**Publisher:** Atari **Developer:** Melbourne House **Release Date:** Spring





Hotshot heats things up.

## BEST BUDS
**Mini-Cons are your friends**

As in the crappy *Armada* TV show, Mini-Cons Pokéfy things up—the side that collects the most has the distinct advantage. More than 50 are available to power up Optimus, Red Alert, or Hotshot, and you'll always have one at your side helping you blast the baddies.

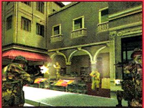
# COMING SOON

**The latest on what's coming out and when. Can you tell it's November? (Remember: no release date is ever final!)**

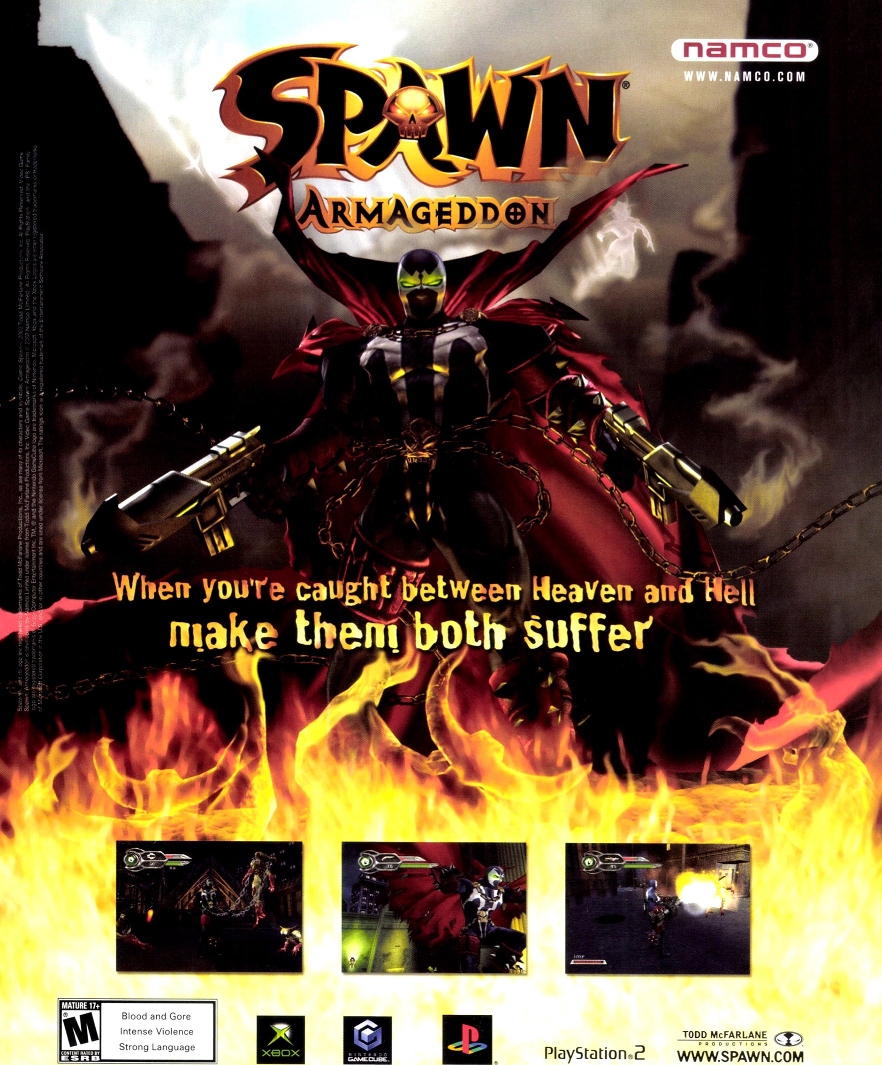
### NOVEMBER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **American Idol** | Codemasters | Be the next Kelly Clarkson |
| **Barbie: Treasures in Time** | VUG | It's a doll game...yay |
| **Battlestar Galactica** | VUG | 40 years before the TV show |
| **Bloody Roar 4** | Konami | Shapeshifting fighting game |
| **Bratz: Formal Funk** | Ubisoft | Funk in a prom dress |
| **Cabela's Dangerous Hunts** | Activision | More hunting...more dangerous! |
| **Carmen Sandiego: Track a Thief** | BAM! | Not edutainment these days |
| **Crash Nitro Kart** | VUG | As good as *Crash Team Racing*? |
| **Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat** | VUG | *Klonoa* wannabe |
| **Dynasty Warriors 4: XL** | Koei | Expansion pack to *DW4* |
| **ESPN College Hoops** | Sega | The best college b-ball? |
| **EverQuest Online Adv.: Frontiers** | Sony OE | If you can't wait for FFXI... |
| **Eye Toy** | Sony CEA | Motion games for PS2 |
| **Fairly Oddparents** | THQ | We're fairly uninterested |
| **Fatal Frame II: Crimson Butterfly** | Tecmo | Seeing red...with horror |
| **Freestyle Street Soccer** | Acclaim | *NBA Street* with a soccer ball |
| **Frogger's Adventures: The Rescue** | Konami | It's not easy being green |
| **Goblin Commander** | Jaleco | Strategic goblin commanding |
| **Harry Potter: Sorcerer's Stone** | EA Games | Remaking the PS1 Harry game |
| **Harry Potter: Quidditch WC** | EA Games | A Quidditch sim |
| **The Hobbit** | VUG | Adapting Tolkien |
| **I-Ninja** | Namco | The next great platform character? |
| **IHRA Drag Racing 3** | Bethesda | They've made *three* of them?! |
| **Karaoke Revolution** | Konami | The first karaoke game |
| **The King of Fighters 2000/2001** | SNK NeoGeo | Two hardcore fighting games |
| **Kya: Dark Lineage** | Atari | Platforming with girl power |
| **Legacy of Kain: Defiance** | Eidos | Most action-packed *Kain* ever |
| **Looney Tunes: Back in Action** | EA Games | Based on the movie |
| **LOTR: The Return of the King** | EA Games | Now more than hack-n-slash |
| **Lowrider** | Jaleco | All my friends get a little higher |
| **Lupin the Third: Sorcerer King** | Bandai | Classic anime, solid-looking game |
| **Manhunt** | Rockstar | You thought *GTA* was violent? |
| **MOTU–He-Man: Def. of Grayskull** | TDK | "I have the power!" |
| **Medal of Honor: Rising Sun** | EA Games | Play Pearl Harbor |
| **Metal Arms: Glitch in the System** | VUG | Surprise hit of the year? |
| **Monster 4X4: Masters of Metal** | Ubisoft | Monster trucks |
| **Muppets Party Cruise** | TDK | Muppets gone wild! |
| **NCAA Final Four 2004** | Sony CEA | Can you make the Big Dance? |
| **NCAA March Madness 2004** | EA Sports | Well...can you?! |
| **Need for Speed: Underground** | EA Big | Beautiful street racing |
| **PBA Bowling 2004** | Bethesda | Bowl for $19.99 |
| **Prince of Persia: Sands of Time** | Ubisoft | Classic action-adventure reborn |
| **Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando** | Sony CEA | Even better this time |
| **Rogue Ops** | Kemco | *Splinter Cell* with breasts |
| **Secret Weapons Over Normandy** | LucasArts | Take on Nazis in the sky |
| **Sitting Ducks** | Hip Int. | We have no idea what this is.... |
| **SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs** | Sony CEA | Online military action returns |
| **Space Channel 5: Special Edition** | Agetec | Ulala! It's two *SC5* games in one! |
| **Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy** | THQ | Platforming in ancient Egypt |
| **SpyHunter 2** | Midway | Now with an Angelic touch |
| **Star Trek: Shattered Universe** | TDK | Sulu visits the mirror universe |
| **Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines** | Atari | First-person shooting as Arnold |
| **T.C.'s Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm** | Ubisoft | The next *Splinter Cell*? No |
| **Trivial Pursuit** | Atari | Test your knowledge |
| **True Crime: Streets of L.A.** | Activision | GTA: Activision's City |
| **Whiplash** | Eidos | Animal cruelty—hilarious! |
| **World Championship Pool** | Jaleco | World championship pool |

Kya: Dark Lineage



T. Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm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Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Strong Language

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SEASON MODE, CHECK.

LEGENDS, CHECK.

ELIMINATION CHAMBER, CHECK.

BRA & PANTY MATCH, HELL YEAH.

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PlayStation®2

TEEN
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Violence

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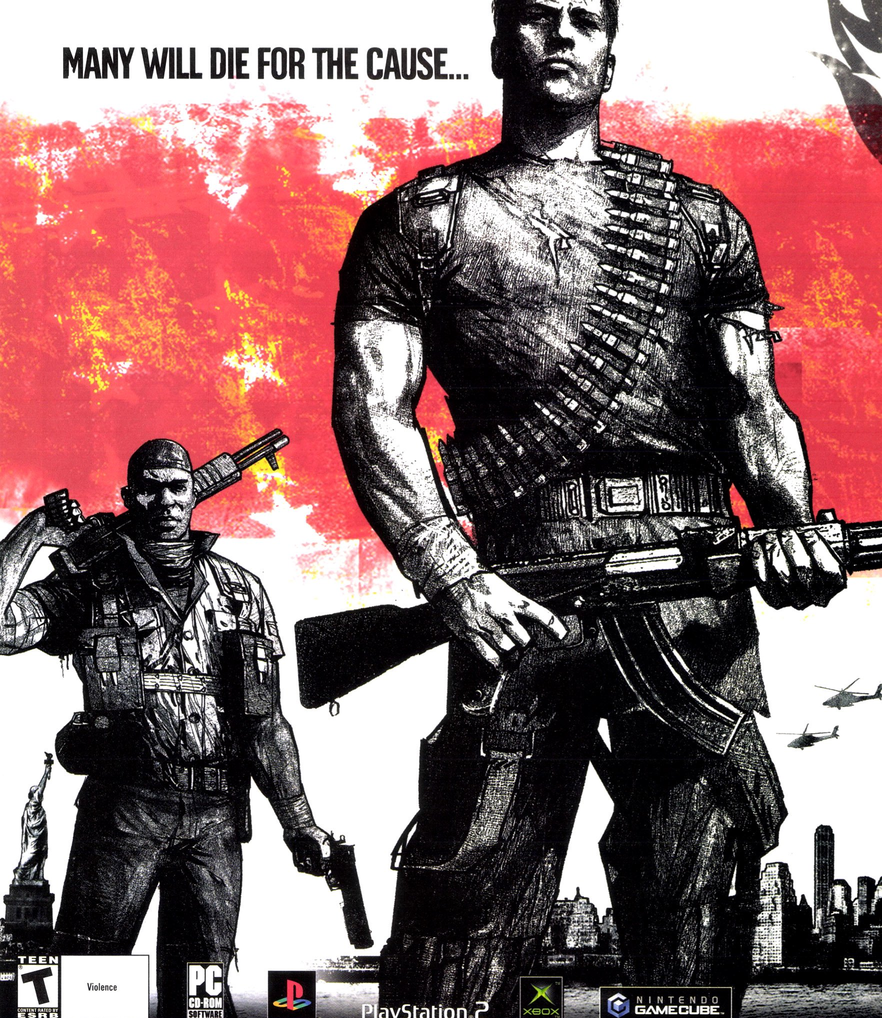
MANY WILL DIE FOR THE CAUSE...

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CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE

PlayStation 2

XBOX

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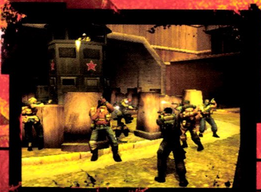

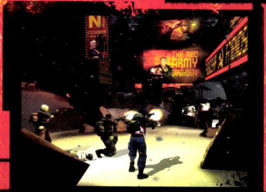

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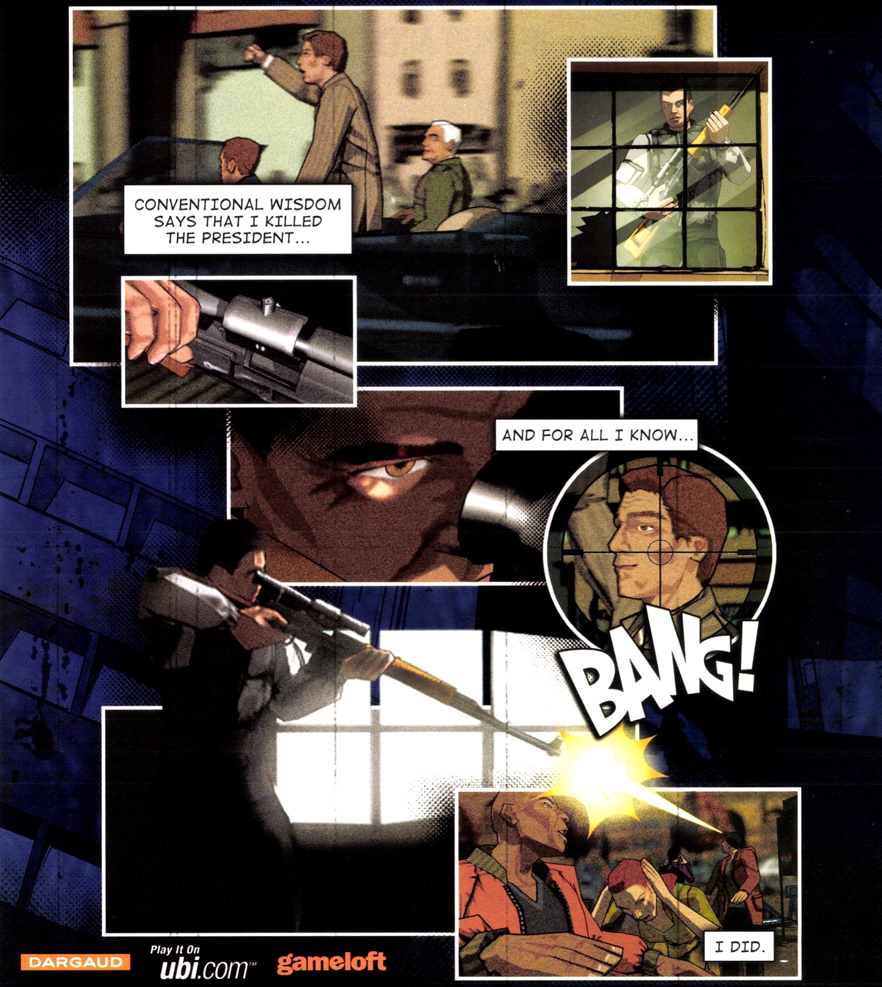
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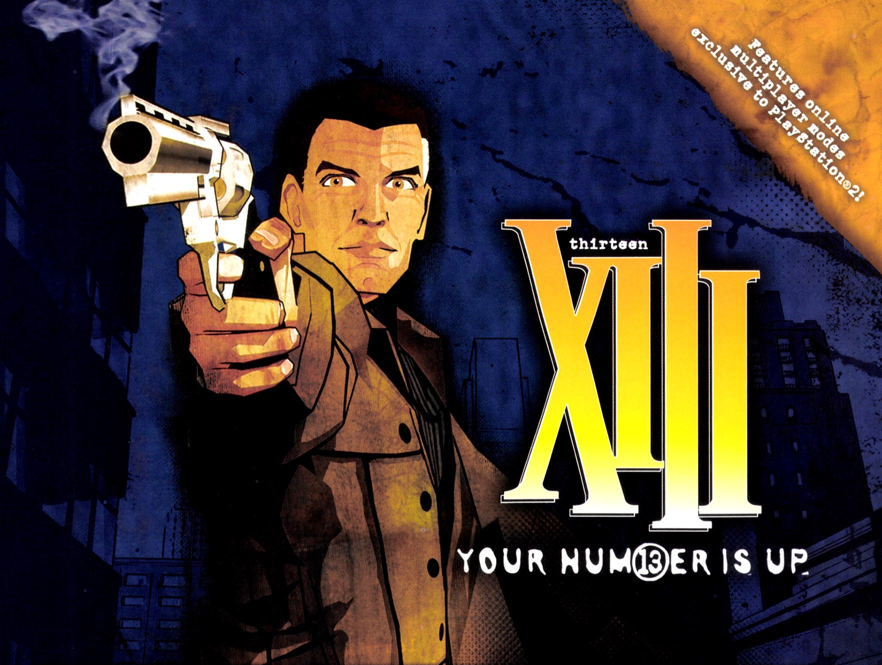
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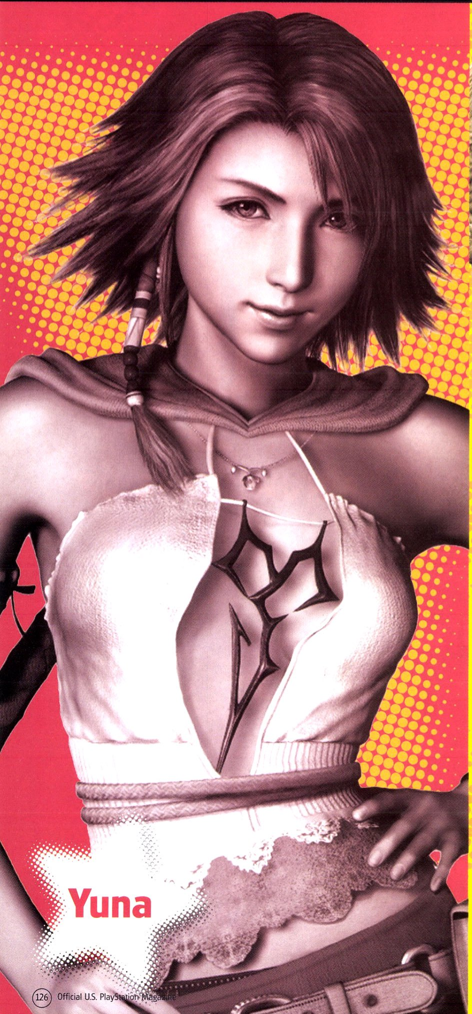
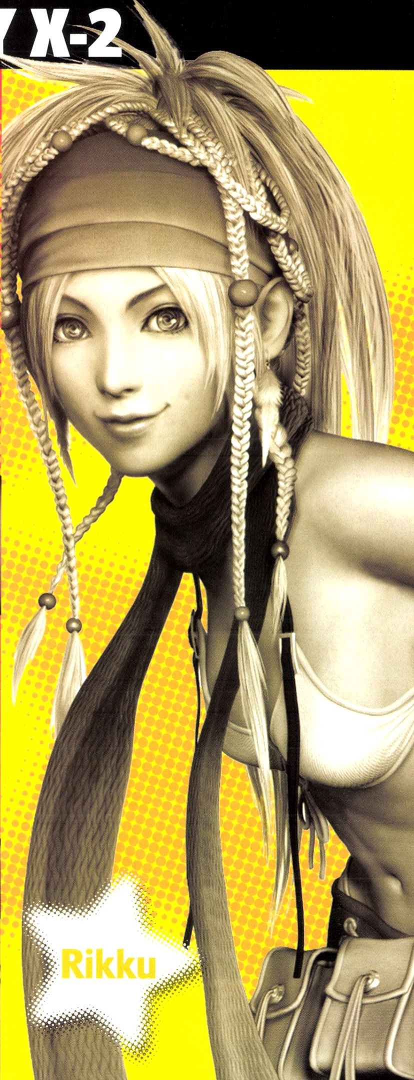
# FINAL FANTASY X-2





# girls just wanna have FUN

Sin has been defeated. Peace has been restored. The Eternal Calm is in full effect. The Yevon faith, a cornerstone of the summoner tradition, has been discredited. So what's a former High Summoner to do? How about letting down her hair and having some fun!

Yuna's back, with a sassy new look and a spunky new attitude. Joining the once-demure savior of Spira on her journey as a thrill-seeking sphere hunter is her adorable cousin Rikku, along with a moody, mysterious newcomer named Paine. Together, they're the Gullwings, a trio of treasure-seeking gals in search of adventure, profits...and good times.

But all is not as perfect as it looks. See, Yuna started her journey because of a very special sphere—one that seemed to show her lost love Tidus locked away somewhere, fighting for his freedom.

Meanwhile, the Eternal Calm is crumbling. It's been two years since Yuna and her gang of guardians overcame Sin. Since then, petty factional feuds have become the order of the day, dividing families and friends, and threatening to rip the land apart. Somehow, Yuna finds herself at the center of a swirling storm. Once again, she'll have to step in to save the world from certain destruction.

A hero's job is never finished.

*Final Fantasy X-2*—the first-ever true sequel to a traditional *Final Fantasy*—starts off with a bang and roars ahead with a rush of excitement. Sure, it's every bit a *Final Fantasy* as any other...but it's also something completely different. On the surface, the game looks lighthearted enough—and in part that's true. For the first time ever, the story is genuinely funny, absurdly quirky, even silly. Yet underneath the comedy lies a tale that's just as deep as you'd come to expect from the master storytellers at Square.

The tone isn't the only big change here. The game unfolds in an episodic fashion, with a collection of varied missions that you can pick and choose to play (or even skip altogether) in whatever order you like. Wanna barrel ahead to the end, bypassing entire areas, side quests, and extra missions? No problem—but just don't expect to get the good ending. Yes, there are multiple endings here, so the choices you make really do have consequences. In fact, this might be the first *Final Fantasy* that you'll actually replay the second you beat it.

All that, plus a blazingly fast, new battle system and lots and lots of costume changes. Indeed, *Final Fantasy X-2* is so much more than just another sequel.

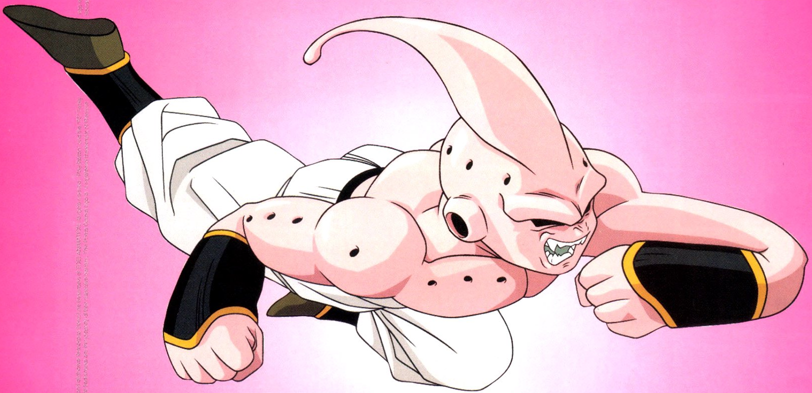
It's a whole new kind of fantasy.

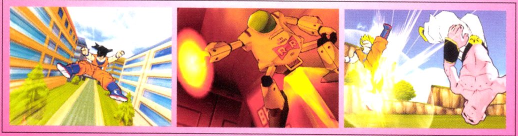
**by Gary Steinman**

**PRE-ORDER NOW**

# Ah, the joys of evil.

ATARI





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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Violence

# BABY one more time

It was the game that was never meant to be. For 15 years, every *Final Fantasy* had been a completely separate experience, with discrete stories, different characters, and unique settings. Sure, there were common elements, along with a fairly consistent (if undefinable) feel—but other than those two special words in the title, each game was different from the last.

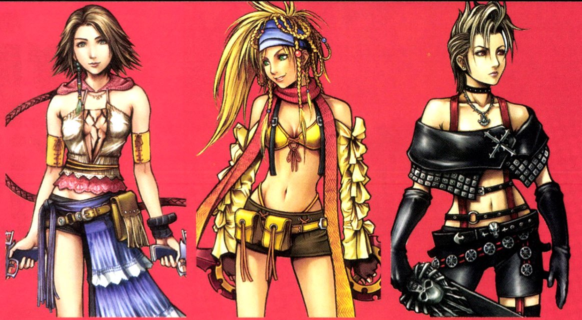
It was time for a change.

But why now? Simple: economics. With development costs running in the multimillions, it didn't make sense to start fresh with every *Final Fantasy*. "It was a little too much to all of a sudden toss aside all the assets we created to work on the next *Final Fantasy*," says Producer Yoshinori Kitase. "We wanted to find a way to reuse some of the assets from the original, but add a little variation here and there. The goal was to maintain something that's similar in feel but also completely different so that it came out as if it were a different team that handled this title."

When we first heard about this sequel over a year ago, we naturally assumed it would share the same battle system, the same characters, the same structure... the same *everything*. But Director Motomu Toriyama is quick to claim that was never Square's intention. "We knew from the very beginning that if we were going to do a sequel, it would have to be a drastic change, as much as possible within the boundaries that were set by the original story and world," he says. "Being that it was the first direct sequel in our flagship *Final Fantasy* series, we didn't want it to be just another sequel. We needed to make a big impact."

Rather than sticking with any formula established in *Final Fantasy X*, Kitase and his team rebuilt the entire game, creating an experience that's not only different from its predecessor but also altogether unique, compared with any previous *Final Fantasy*. The combat is a fast and furious new take on the classic Active Time Battle system. The story is told through nonlinear, choose-your-own-adventure-style missions. The elaborate summons, a *Final Fantasy* sacred cow, have been replaced with a system of spectacular costume changes that alter your stats and abilities on the fly. There's a new action element that lets you jump and climb around certain areas. But the biggest change has got to be the tone. It's light, it's goofy, it's...funny!

"With Yuna no longer a summoner, she could be more free-spirited and cheerful," Toriyama notes. "She's no longer carrying all that weight from the original story, so it was just a natural move to make the sequel brighter and more lighthearted."



## MY, HOW YOU'VE GROWN!

Curious about how the cast of *Final Fantasy X-2* has grown in the two years since the end of *FFX*? Scenario Writer Kazushige Nojima offers some insight: "In the original story, before they defeated Sin, Yuna followed the Yevon belief. After Sin, she really sees a turning point in what she believes—it'll be more obvious in the latter half of the game. By the end of *FFX-2*, Yuna pretty much believes what she wants; she no longer lets others tell her what to think. That would be one of the major changes in how she's developed from where we left off in the first story."

"Both Rikku and Yuna have to adapt to the current state of Spira," Nojima explains. "They need to find a new approach for a new world." But while Yuna has evolved, Rikku is pretty much the same effervescent cutie we fell for in *FFX*. "For Rikku, the change is that she hasn't changed," Nojima jokes. Yeah, she's wearing even less clothes, but sometimes you have to start with your appearance. In fact, Nojima suggests, that may be the reason behind Yuna's bold new look. "In order to change on the inside, Yuna has to first change on the outside."

"Yuna is more active and beginning to show her feelings more openly, and Rikku has been like that since the beginning," Nojima chuckles. "With the two being a lot more talkative, there had to be someone with a calm, cool demeanor who could put a halt to their excessive chattiness. If it were Lulu in that role, she would have completely shut them down, and the story wouldn't have advanced at all. But in Paine's case, she's someone who can remain neutral, keep the others focused, and help the story carry on together with these two girls."

Gullwings! Front and center!

## THE LOVE BOAT

Although *FFX-2* includes some big changes, one thing that had to remain consistent was the look of Spira itself. "Since we're picking up the story from where we left off two years ago, we felt we shouldn't have any major changes in the overall world," says Art Director Shintaro Takai. "But if I were to point out just one of the things I drastically changed, it's the airship the Gullwings use. It's over-the-top different." Unlike previous *Final Fantasies*, you control the Celsius right from the start, so it serves as central hub for the missions. And since it's piloted by that Al Bhed freakazoid Brother (that's his name!), Takai wanted to make sure that the airship is wacky enough to match its oddball crew.

## ETERNAL CALM

Economics wasn't the only reason behind *FFX-2*—fan feedback played a role, too. When the Japan-only *Final Fantasy X International* was released, it included a bonus 15-minute video set after the end of *FFX*. "When *Eternal Calm* appeared on *International*, there was already talk about doing a sequel," Kitase says. "As soon as we saw the reaction, though, we were *sure* about doing a sequel." And now you can see it in English, for the very first time ever, only on the *OPM* demo disc!

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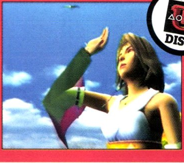

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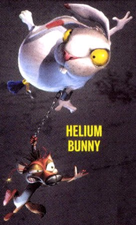
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**HARE-SICLE**

**HARE CLOG**

- Flaming Fur Ball
- Bunny Grinder
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- Bunny Fuse
- Hare-sicle
- Electro Static Rabbit
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- Bunny Cannon
- Helium Bunny
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- Stuffed Rabbit
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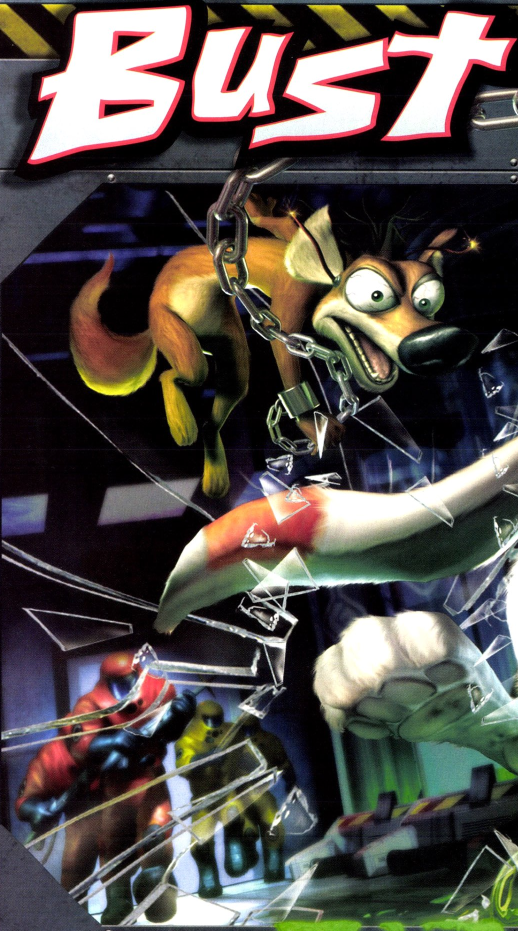

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- The Haunted Mansion
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- Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home
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- Eternal Calm – FFX-2 prologue

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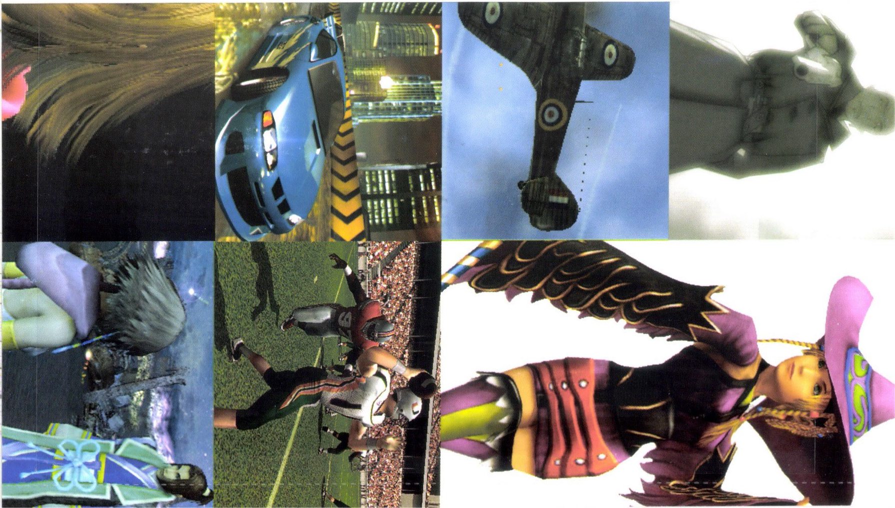

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# FINAL FANTASY X-2

## get the PARTY started

From the moment you start playing *FFX-2*, you'll notice how very different it is.

"Just by watching the opening movie, you'll see how Yuna has changed," says Scenario Writer Kazushige Nojima. The setting: a concert at the Luca stadium, starring High Summoner Yuna. The song: one of those peppy J-pop affairs, complete with jaunty male dancers cavorting in the background. Meanwhile, Rikku and Paine are lurking around the stadium, fighting off enemies as they make their way to center stage for a confrontation with Lady Yuna...or is that really her?

"Once you start *playing* the game, you might not really feel the change," Nojima adds, "but we want you to at least notice the differences right from the start."

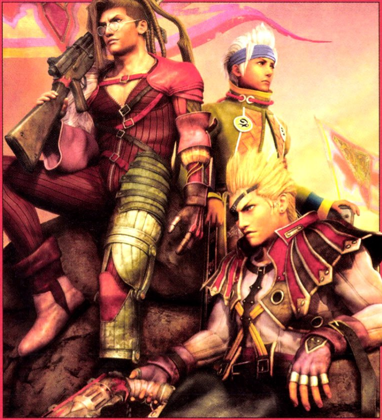
A fitting setup, considering the game's theme: changes. For Nojima, that notion extends beyond the passive sense of the word. "It's also about the willingness to challenge yourself," he explains. "To not have to think about the end result, but focus on process of transformation."

Speaking of changes, Nojima saw this sequel as the perfect chance to alter the way the story unfolds. Unlike a typical straight-line narrative, *FFX-2* is built in bite-sized nuggets, with each mission lasting anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours; you can play them in any order you like (with a few limitations, naturally). Plus, at certain points, your decisions will actually affect the outcome of the game. "In the previous *Final Fantasies*, we never had room to even consider creating a story based on a Free Scenario system," Nojima says. "Simply put, this was the best opportunity to make this change." Nojima also cites a recent trend toward shorter gameplay experiences. "You don't have to stress about playing 80 hours to finish a game. There's replay value, but you can get through the game in a decent amount of time."

Nojima compares the *FFX-2* experience to channel surfing. "Like changing channels on a TV, you have the ability to choose which mission you want to see," he says. This storytelling technique helped free him up to add more humor, variety, and spice to the missions. From helping Yuna hand out balloons while wearing a moogle costume, to battling an errant Aeon who's out for your destruction, the missions are as varied as it gets. Some focus on fast action, others feel like an elaborate minigame, and still others are built around RPG mainstays such as dungeon exploration and combat.

The Free Scenario system also was perfect for *FFX-2*'s lighter story. Wacky antics work better in small doses, interspersed with the heavy moments we've come to expect from *Final Fantasy*. "The Free Scenario system really helped me capture the right timing," Nojima says.

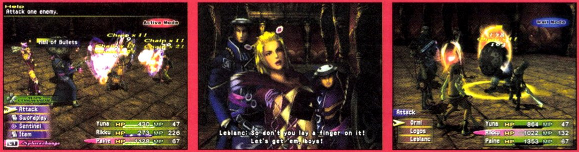
## STRANGE BEDFELLOWS



And now a little something for the ladies. Introducing...Nooj! Baralai! And Gippal! Who the heck are these handsome hunks? None other than the heads of the three rival factions that are tearing Spira apart. Nooj helms the Youth League, a ragtag collection of former Crusaders who barely skirt the line between protectors of the land and displaced thugs. The platinum-haired gent in the middle is Baralai, the leader of New Yevon; his cold exterior belies a passionate devotion to preserving Spira's past. His detractors, though, suspect the New Yevon political party of harboring some very harmful secrets. Seated below is Gippal, the head of the Machina Faction. Strutting around with a rock-star swagger, Gippal has steered clear of the political machinations in Spira, yet somehow he's connected to the other two gents...and possibly Paine as well.

What's with all these factions? "After defeating Sin, Spira has turned into a peaceful land," Nojima says. "My way of thinking—and not just in this particular story—is that after a war, even if there's this peaceful land, there would still be different groups that believe in different things. In this story, there are three main groups. It's a natural thing that when a war is over, a nation could come together but also remain separate. That's what I put into this story."

## RIVAL GANGS UNITED BY FATE



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## MIGHT AS WELL JUMP

Wanna get some action? Get your mind out of the gutter, you scoundrel! We're talking about those new action elements in *FFX-2*. While these don't represent a radical change, it's something that Art Director Shintaro Takai is particularly pleased about. "It might not be something completely different, and it's been done in other games—but I'm proud of the new movements for Yuna, how she can hop and climb and jump." RPG purists might shudder at the thought, with fears of a Yuna Raider game ruining their prized *Final Fantasy* franchise, but in practice, the actiony bits don't do much to alter the standard style of exploration—they merely enhance the interactivity. Basically, some areas are built with layers that you can leap over, scale, climb, and descend. It's as simple as tapping the Circle button at the right time. Or, you can simply hold the Circle button to automatically trigger any actions when they're available, but be careful: Time it incorrectly, and you might jump when you should drop, thus missing a hidden treasure chest or a secret area.

Wanna try it for yourself? Then check out the playable demo, which includes an early mission on Mt. Gagazet. "It was designed specifically so that there are areas you would have to climb and jump," Takai says. "We didn't design it first and then implement the actions. It was something we were building simultaneously to make sure you had to use those skills."

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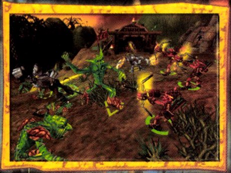

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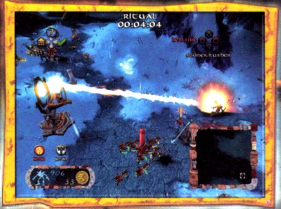

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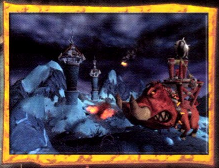

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# FINAL FANTASY X-2

## DRESS you up in my LOVE

Love 'em or don't, you can't deny the breathtaking beauty of the awesome summon animations that have become a *Final Fantasy* hallmark. But with the Aeons now set free (yes, that's an *FFX* spoiler—sue us), what could possibly replace them? Art Director Shintaro Takai has the answer.

"If you look at our previous *Final Fantasies*, there has always been this one glamourous high point where we say, 'Take a look at what we have. This is the very best from this *Final Fantasy* game.' I definitely think the costume changes qualify as that high point," Takai says. "While there wasn't any goal to make the transformations even more attractive than the summoning animations in *FFX*, it's nice to see something that can replace it and have as much of an impact as the original."

Those transformation animations—spectacular though they may be—are more than just a case of adding a layer of fluffy whipped frosting to an already tasty cheesecake. Changing costumes is actually the centerpiece of *FFX-2*'s gameplay. Throughout the game, you can acquire up to 14 different dresspheres—items that not only alter the way you look, but also change your job class. (There are also three special dresspheres, one for each gal...but we don't want to spoil those for you.) You change dresspheres on the fly during battles, meaning your party can switch between 2,744 possible battle configurations—*if* you find all the dresspheres, that is.

But why costumes? Why not go with a less sartorial take on the job system?

"We wanted to make sure we had enough freshness—something to keep things going," says Kitase. "In *FFX*, you were able to choose who you wanted in battle from among seven characters. You were able to swap in and out during battle, too. With *FFX-2*, we knew there were going to be only three girls in the party, and you wouldn't be allowed to switch in and out with any of the other characters, such as Wakka or Lulu from the original story. In order to maintain something similar, we wanted the girls to have enough outfits so that it gave you a lot of variations throughout the battles."

*(Continued on page 136)*

### GUN MAGE

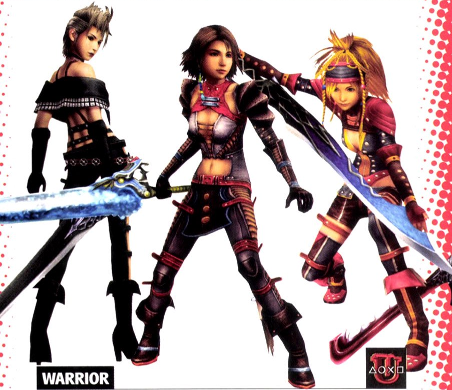
Need to unload a hefty helping of hurt on a specific type of enemy? Then the Gun Mage is your best bet. Use the Fiend Hunter ability to target all kinds of foes by their class, unleashing quadruple the damage on everything from Flans to Elementals. The Scan ability also comes in handy when you need the 411 on what you're up against. But sometimes it's fun to play as a Gun Mage for all the *wrong* reasons. "I often chose the Gun Mage for all three characters while I was playing," confesses Scenario Writer Kazushige Nojima. "If you look at all three girls from behind, they have more of a sex appeal than if you look at them from the front." We'll, um, back him up on that one!

### GUNNER

Yuna's default costume is perfect for anyone who's eager to test her reflexes during combat. It's the outfit most used by Art Director Shintaro Takai, for that very reason. "I prefer action," Takai says, referring to the Trigger Happy ability. Choose this attack option and you can unleash a burst of bullets by furiously jamming on the R1 shoulder button. As you gain more ability points, you can unlock higher levels of Trigger Happy, which gives you more time to unleash even more attacks. Skilled gamers can try to time the attacks of the other two gals so they form a chain at the end of a barrage of bullets, exponentially increasing the power of the final hits. Very cool.

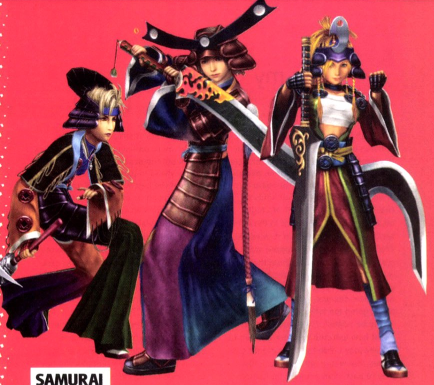
### ALCHEMIST

Called Item Shooter in Japan, this job class takes a lot of effort to be effective, but the payoff is extraordinary. Just ask Battle Planning Director Takatsugu Nakazawa. "I'm not a huge fan of action games, so I tend to look for characters that don't require a whole lot of action," he says. "But I enjoy the other tasks involved with developing a very strong character. Item Shooter requires you to acquire a lot of items, but it's very strong in the end." Not only does an Alchemist have an unlimited reserve of potent potions, but she can mix items for incredible effect. Fun fact: Every Gunner class has that cute side skirt—except for Paine's Alchemist. Apparently, it would have made her look too feminine.



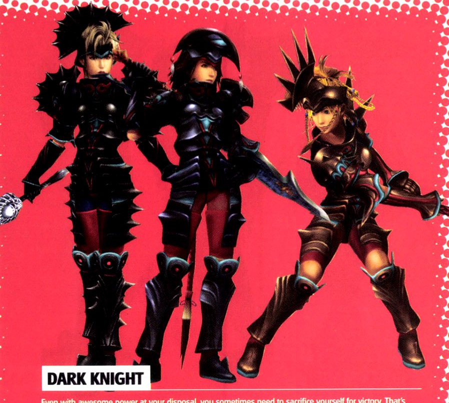
## WARRIOR

Recognize that sword Yuna's carrying? Yep, it's based on the weapon Tidus wielded in *FFX*. While you're at it, take a gander at Rikku's sword, which is a riff on the one carried by that legendary guardian Auron. Only Paine gets to carry a unique piece of high-end cutlery. "This is her own weapon," says Alternate Costume Designer Tetsu Tsukamoto. "It doesn't belong to anyone else." Keep an eye out for the similar symbol on all three of Paine's warrior-class swords. It's only fitting, since Paine doesn't have a connection to the previous game, and since this is also her default class. Powerful in the classic sense, a Warrior can easily overpower most enemies while maintaining a strong defense.



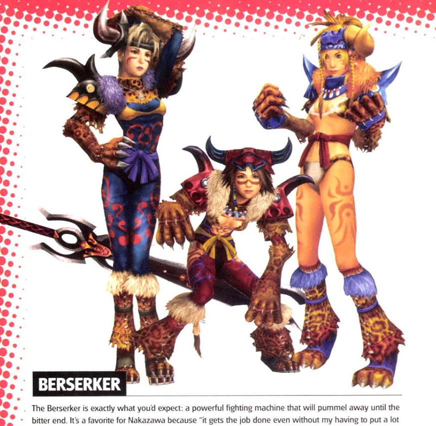
## SAMURAI

A twist on the traditional swordswoman, the Samurai makes up in other ways what she lacks in raw strength and defense. (Don't worry, she's still pretty darn powerful, but she's just not as strong as the other two warrior classes.) Not only can she increase her output with every consecutive attack, but she also gets stronger as she takes more damage. In other words, this is a job class that gives as good as it gets. The Samurai also stands out as being the only warrior who can heal herself. Plus, if you've got a lot of loose change hanging around, you can toss it at enemies—though, to be honest, it's a waste of gil. As they say in San Francisco, "Care, Not Cash."



## DARK KNIGHT

Even with awesome power at your disposal, you sometimes need to sacrifice yourself for victory. That's when the Dark Knight's ability to drain her hit points to damage all enemies comes in handy. From a design standpoint, Paine's Dark Knight is Tsukamoto's favorite. "I handled a lot of monster designs prior to working on the costumes for *FFX-2*," he says. "It feels like the scales of the monsters apply to this design. That's why I like it a lot." Tsukamoto also told us that each of the girls' headpieces represents her personality: a rounded top for Yuna's well-balanced mindset, sharp edges for Paine's prickly outlook, and an open helm for Rikku's active, outgoing lifestyle.



## BERSERKER

The Berserker is exactly what you'd expect: a powerful fighting machine that will pummel away until the bitter end. It's a favorite for Nakazawa because "it gets the job done even without my having to put a lot of effort into it," he says. "I'm blown away more by the looks than what it actually does." Tsukamoto admits to having some trouble designing these costumes. At first, Yuna looked too much like a four-legged creature, so her outfit had to be modified. Meanwhile, Rikku's Berserker was too different from Yuna's, so he added the markings to create a consistency between the three girls. Tsukamoto still wonders if Rikku is showing too much skin—but we're not complaining!

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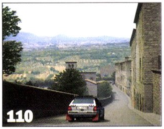

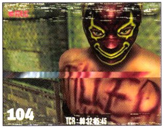

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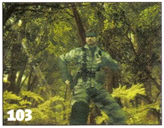

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Naughty or nice? Can't it be both? **48**

If you think *Final Fantasy X-2* is nothing more than girly girls playing dress-up, think again.

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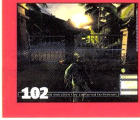

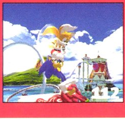

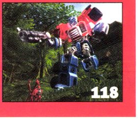

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# DRESS you up in my LOVE (pt. 2)

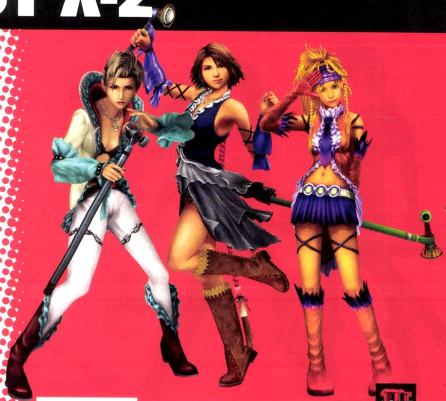
Although the final selection of dresspheres was determined by the entire development team, you can credit Tetsu Tsukamoto, alternate costume designer, for creating such an eye-popping array of outfits. Drawing from all kinds of real-world inspirations—from high-fashion glossies like *Vogue* to the fantastical costume design in movies like *The Fifth Element*—Tsukamoto set out to create a collection of clothing that would reflect the unique personality of each underlying job. But with such whimsical designs, was he ever worried about going too far?

"To be honest, I was quite surprised about how extreme we were allowed to be, because I didn't want to create costumes that would feel too much like they're part of an anime," Tsukamoto confides. "But when Nomura-san [a.k.a. Tetsuya Nomura, the character designer for *FFX*, who returned to create the default costumes for Yuna, Rikku, and Paine] sent me an image of Rikku, I was almost shocked that it was OK to go this far. Based on that, I didn't feel as if I had any restrictions."

For more on how the costumes work, check out the descriptions to the right, or flip ahead to page 138 for a breakdown of the battle system. And for a sampling of the costumes in action, pop that playable demo into your PS2 (look for the PlayStation Underground logo for an indication of which costumes are available on the disc). Just be sure to try them all, Tsukamoto suggests, or else you'll be missing the point of the game.

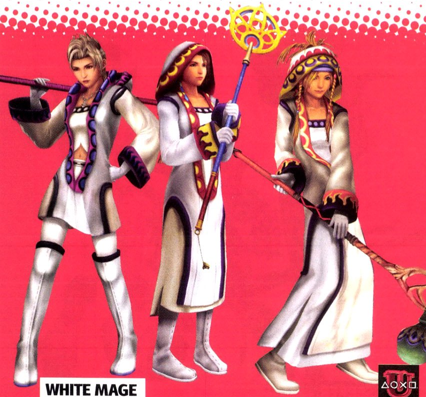
"The dress-change system is something that we almost want to force you to do," he says. "That *is* the game. Aside from the story, and aside from it being a sequel, that's what the enjoyment should be focused on. I think we did it in a way that you almost feel like you have to change simply because you can. All three girls can change on the fly during battle, and you feel like changing every other turn to help with different monsters and different strategies.

"You should enjoy changing dresspheres. If you don't do that, there's almost no reason to play this game."



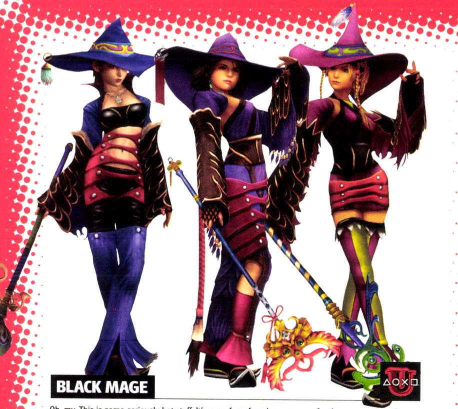
## SONGSTRESS

The Songstress might seem like a throwaway job, but don't be too quick to dismiss her. A combination of the traditional Bard/Dancer classes, the Songstress is an extremely useful support job. From casting Darkness, Silence, and Sleep, to boosting your party's Strength, Magic, or Accuracy, a well-developed Songstress has a wide repertoire of skills (and dance moves, to boot) that'll help you squeak past the toughest baddies. We just wish Square stuck with the original translation, Pop Star. Oh, and if you're wondering why Paine's costume is so different from the others, that's because the team couldn't decide whether she should be rock 'n' roll or Top 40, so Tsukamoto split the difference.



## WHITE MAGE

No need for lengthy explanations here. The White Mage is your healer, the one who kisses away the pain of those nasty boo-boos. Don't leave home without her, or else you'll face a world of hurt. By the way, if you're wondering what's up with the hoods, we've got the answer. "Rikku doesn't have a full hat because we had to show her hair, so we chopped off the tip of the hood," Tsukamoto says. Naturally. "For Paine, it would be less powerful to wear a hood, so we left it off." Er, OK. As for Yuna, Tsukamoto admits to being a bit underwhelmed by her perfunctory outfit. "There's something missing," he moans. "I would have wanted to spice her up more."



## BLACK MAGE

Oh, my. This is some seriously hot stuff. It's one of our favorite costumes, for the same reason that Director Motomu Toriyama cites: "Just from a design standpoint, I love Rikku's Black Mage because of her miniskirt." Think she looks good from the front? Well, she's just as sexy from the other side. Pop in our demo disc, get into a battle, and make sure you take a peek at the way Rikku shakes her moneymaker at the end of combat. But the Black Mage isn't just eye candy. She can cast all those classic offensive spells, which are essential against certain enemies. Now, excuse us while we stare at these lovely lasses for a little while longer....

## THIEF

What kind of self-respecting thief wears high heels? The sexy kind! Apparently, Tsukamoto designed Paine and Yuna so they'd have as much sex appeal as Nomura's original design for Rikku's default character. We think he succeeded. In terms of gameplay, using a Thief early and often will help you later on, as your character will end up quicker than most of the enemies out there, no matter what class you're using. Plus, her Steal ability is essential if you want to have a strong Alchemist; some of those mixable items are hard to find any other way. We also love the fact that the Thief always hits with two attacks, creating an automatic chain that heightens her power.

## TRAINER

The Trainer class comes with a unique skill set for each of the girls. The common element: Every option is a double whammy, like Yuna's ability to cast Fira with a chance of inflicting Blind, or Paine's ability to heal an ally while casting Haste. Neat stuff—but we gotta wonder about the animals. We get the Yojimbo reference with Yuna, but what's up with the monkey and the bird? "The animals mirror the pets in a really old Japanese story called Momotaru," Tsukamoto says, referring to a classic tale of a boy who was found inside a giant peach. Fun fact: Paine was originally supposed to carry a snake, but a programmer put the kibosh on that because he said the animation would be too difficult pull off.

## LADY LUCK

Like the Gunner, Lady Luck is a perfect job for anyone who loves action. While there's a certain random element to spinning the slots, if you can time your button presses just right, you might be able to stop the reel perfectly, unleashing a devastating array of physical and magic attacks. It's a lot of fun...but just like real gambling, there's always a risk involved. Get a bad run and tin pans will fall from the sky above, doling out a deluge of damage to your entire party. We're told that there are some people in Square Enix's test department can strike three 7's every time. If you think you've got that kind of luck (and skill), then this is the costume for you.

## MASCOT

Square asked us not to spoil these costumes for you, and who are we not to oblige? Instead, we bring you yet another fun fact. Apparently, Square had considered an even wackier job for this final dressphere. "We were looking for a job that would be half serious and half joke," says Nakazawa, "and a French Maid form came up during the idea phase. It ended up being completely different: the mascot." The maid concept was scrapped because the team just couldn't get it to work. The idea was to pay her to perform, much like the Yojimbo Aeon in *FFX*. "But if you think about it, what would happen if you run out of money?" Nakazawa asks. "She would go home?"

# LOVE is a battlefield

Call it one of those great RPG ironies: *Final Fantasy*'s Active Time Battle system, in which characters would take their turns in pseudo-real-time, was actually *slower* than many purely turn-based systems. See, there's that small problem of waiting for your turn to come up....

Which is why we were so enamored with the Conditional Turn-Based setup in *Final Fantasy X*. It not only added a nifty strategic element to battles, but also sped up combat by letting you take your turns immediately.

So why return to the ATB in *FFX-2*? Because it was the biggest possible change that could be made to this sequel, according to Battle Planning Director Takatsugu Nakazawa. "If you think about it, we are using the same world, similar environments and monsters, and also, most of the characters are returning. So if we kept the same battle system, it would have been really repetitive. We wanted to make it fresh for the sequel." But isn't a return to the basic battle system that's been a part of every *Final Fantasy* from *FFIV* to *FFIX*, just more of the same thing?

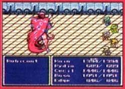
Not if you tweak it so that it feels totally different. In *FFX-2*, everything moves at lightning speed, with quick encounters that can speed by in just a few seconds. Turns come up almost immediately, letting you practically button-mash your way through combat. Boss battles are exhilarating, adrenaline-pumping affairs that will keep you on the edge of your seat. There's never a moment to rest, and you'll often need to think several steps ahead to beat some of the bigger baddies. "In the previous installments when we used the ATB system, it was primarily used to indicate the order of the characters' turns," Nakazawa says. "This time, it's not just the characters' order, but also when the characters will execute their moves. And that's not just your allies, but your enemies as well. It brings the speed up a little bit more. You're not just waiting around for your turn to come."

Other changes: You can now chain your attacks together, leading to all kinds of quirky strategic maneuvers. Try, for example, waiting an extra half-second for two of your girls' turns to come up, then attack at once to exponentially increase the damage. Or tack a final sword swipe on to the end of a chain of Gunner hits for a big boost. You can even halt an enemy's attack if you wack it at the right moment.

It's fun, it's different, it's incredibly addictive. It's also a perfect complement to the lighthearted nature of this sequel. "I would say that the lighter tone of the story influenced the battle system," says Nakazawa. "It definitely makes sense to have more of a fast-paced system."

## BATTLE SYSTEM 101

The combat in *FFX-2* might feel unique, but it's got deep roots in past *Final Fantasies*.



Start with the Active Time Battle system, which has been around since *Final Fantasy IV*...

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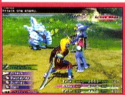
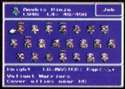
...add an entire bottle of Tabasco...



...getting things to be extra tasty and incredibly fast!



Next, take the job system that was introduced in *FFIII*, refined in *FFV*, and perfected in *Final Fantasy Tactics*...

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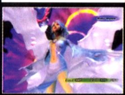
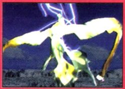
...toss in the character-swapping mechanic from *FFX*...



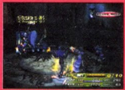
...and you've got the crazy costume-changing dress-up mode!



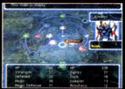
Now, take the *FFVII*'s Limit Breaks and combine them with the button-mashing Guardian Boosts used in *FFVIII*...

+

...make it something you can use on a regular basis...



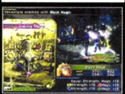
...and link them up with other attacks for big bonus Chains!



Finally, take the Sphere Grid from *FFX*...

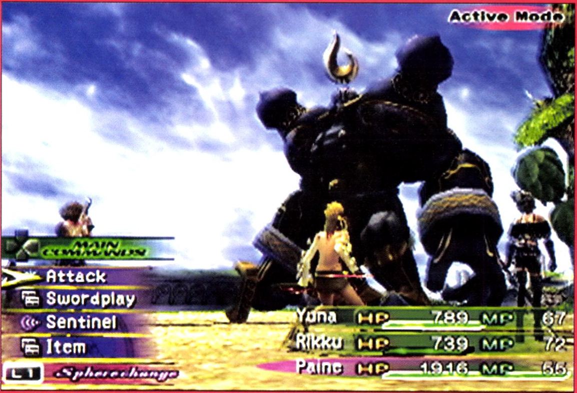
+

...shrink it, make it readily accessible during battle, and make lots of them with all kinds of characteristics...



...and you've got the Garment Grid system!

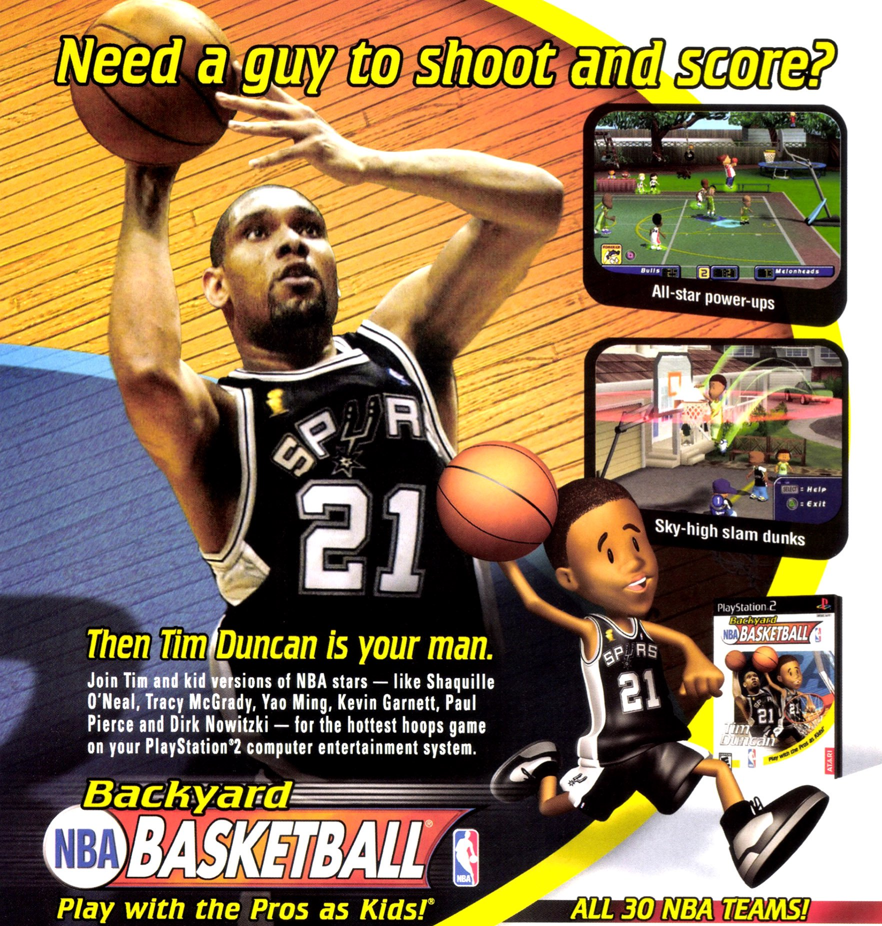
> **"I would say that the lighter tone of the story influenced the battle system. Also, *FFX-2* uses the nonlinear Free Scenario setup. It definitely makes sense to have more of a fast-paced system."**



### BODACIOUS BATTLES

When you first start playing, you might think that *FFX-2* ain't all that tough. And for the first few hours of the game, that's definitely the case. Just wait until you get to some of the tougher bosses, though. Believe us, if you're not prepared, you're in for a whole lotta hurt. That's especially the case with some of the extra bosses. But perseverance pays off, because the reward for beating some of these big baddies often makes the extra effort worthwhile.

# Need a guy to shoot and score?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Melonheads
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# FINAL FANTASY X-2

## justify my LOVE

Sometimes, change is good. In the case of *FFX-2*, change is a very good thing indeed.

We asked Kitase, who's been at the head of the *Final Fantasy* food chain for several installments now, whether he prefers *FFX* or *FFX-2*. While he couldn't definitively commit to picking one over the other, he did admit to being happier with what his team accomplished with *FFX-2*. "My job is to see where our games can go in different forms, different shapes, and different ways," Kitase says. "In that sense, I'm more satisfied with the way *FFX-2* has turned out. It shows our fans—as well as new gamers who might join the *Final Fantasy* community—that we can change things. That there are ways to expand beyond what we've done, which is to tell a new story in every single installment. In that sense, *FFX-2* has given us a new way of thinking and a new look to the *Final Fantasy* franchise. Change is good, once in a while."

For Nakazawa, *FFX-2* succeeds for a simpler reason: It offers something for all kinds of players. "I guess if I were to try to sell this game, I'd say it's a good blend of someone who doesn't prefer action and someone who really likes action," he says, referring to the fact that some members of the team love the action elements that are a part of the exploration as well as certain costumes, such as Lady Luck and Gunner. "In that sense, this is a unique version of *Final Fantasy*—it's not your typical *Final Fantasy* game. But if *FFX-2* were just another serious installment, then this would never have worked. It's almost like we got away with something that's usually not applied or approved."

If you're still on the fence with the new direction here, check out our exclusive playable demo *right now*. Or, flip ahead a few pages for our review. Just keep in mind that you're in for a different kind of *Final Fantasy* experience.

"One of our goals was to accomplish something we weren't able to do. *FFX-2* includes a lot of those new opportunities, breaking your typical *Final Fantasy* rules," Kitase says. "If gamers can accept that, that would make us happy."

Once the game is in players' hands, Toriyama is sure they'll be hooked. "With this Free Scenario system—not only in terms of the story, but also having all kinds of missions—it's basically up to gamers how they want to play it," Toriyama says. "You don't have to follow any rules, but just enjoy the game."

Well, maybe one rule...or at least a very strong suggestion. "The more you play, the more you will see at the end," Tsukamoto says. "Make sure that you play it so you get to the happy ending."

## 7 MORE THINGS ABOUT FFX-2

**TRIVIAL TIDBITS! FUN FACTS!**

**STUFF WE COULDN'T FIT ANYWHERE ELSE!**

### BEHOLD BAHAMUT!

"One of the most meaningful scenes is when you get to Bahamut," says Toriyama. "You probably won't forget that scene." Want a teaser? Check out the Operation: Infiltrate Bevelle! portion of our exclusive playable demo. Although this sequence is taken out of context and represents only a small portion of the entire mission, you'll get a good feel for the intensity of the moment.

ON THE DISC

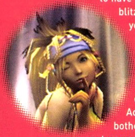
### SPRING TIME

"There's a hot spring somewhere in *FFX-2* where you can see Rikku and the other girls bathing," says Tsukamoto. We stumbled onto this scene, and, well...it's bizarre. Funny, maybe even a little bit sexy...but bizarre. And cool.

### STAND AND DELIVER

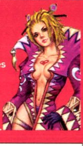
Notice how Yuna, Rikku, and Paine all move differently, even when they're wearing the same outfit? Well, you better appreciate it, because this extra bit of flair almost didn't happen. "At one point, to reduce the costs and time we put into each of these costumes, we were going to have a basic stance and a basic movement for each of the jobs," Tsukamoto says. "In the end, we used a wide variety of movements, which I'm happy about. If they were all the same, that wouldn't have been as good."

### RIKKU, TOO?



Remember those early reports suggesting *FFX-2* would be two separate side stories, one starring Yuna, the other starring Rikku? Well, you'd have to have the lungs of a blitzball champ if you wanted to hold your breath waiting for Rikku's quest to come out. Actually, don't bother, since it's not gonna happen. "It was pretty much a rumor," Kitase explains. "To the extent that I know, it started at one of Square's corporate strategy meetings. They had talked about minimizing costs by developing titles based on an engine that was already created." Apparently, someone in the audience then asked about a game based off of *FFX*—or possibly several games starring all the female characters. "It was all just based off of a rumor stemming from one of the questions that the media had posed to one of our executives," Kitase says.

### FULL SUIT

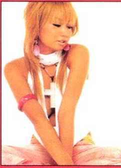


Check out the spade, club, and diamond on the Lady Luck costumes for Yuna, Rikku, and Paine. "Add Leblanc's heart and you'll have all four suits of a card deck," says Tsukamoto.

### FUTURE FANTASY

*FFX-2* is just the start of the *Final Fantasy* revolution. "A lot of people think there's a guideline for creating a *Final Fantasy*, that it has to be a certain way," Kitase says. "In that sense, *FFX-2* is quite a drastic change. For example, the director who's working on *Final Fantasy XII* recently commented that after seeing how *FFX-2* has worked [while] carrying the *Final Fantasy* name, that there's no such thing as following the bible of *Final Fantasy*. That was something that's not only encouraging, but makes sense; that's pretty much what we believed in when we started creating *FFX-2*."

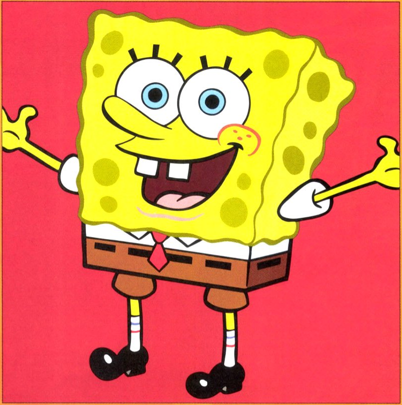
So, what's next? Anything is possible. But, hey, that's a good thing, since in some respects, that's the way it's always been. "If you think about the past, present, and future, there's no one thing that defines *Final Fantasy*," Kitase smiles.



### FAKE EMOTION

Not only did Koda Kumi, a fast-rising J-pop star, provide the vocals for Yuna's opening song, but she was also mo-capped for the dance moves. Too bad you won't hear her voice in the U.S. version. Although Kumi recorded an English version of "Real Emotion," it kinda stunk (it sounded like she was reading—and mangling—a phonetic transliteration of the English lyrics). Square Enix U.S.A. wisely opted to have it rerecorded by a gal who's known as Jade from Sweetbox. To find out more about her, head to www.sweetbox.com.

# WHO MAKES A BETTER HERO? SPONGEBOB OR A GUY NAMED BOB?



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PlayStation 2

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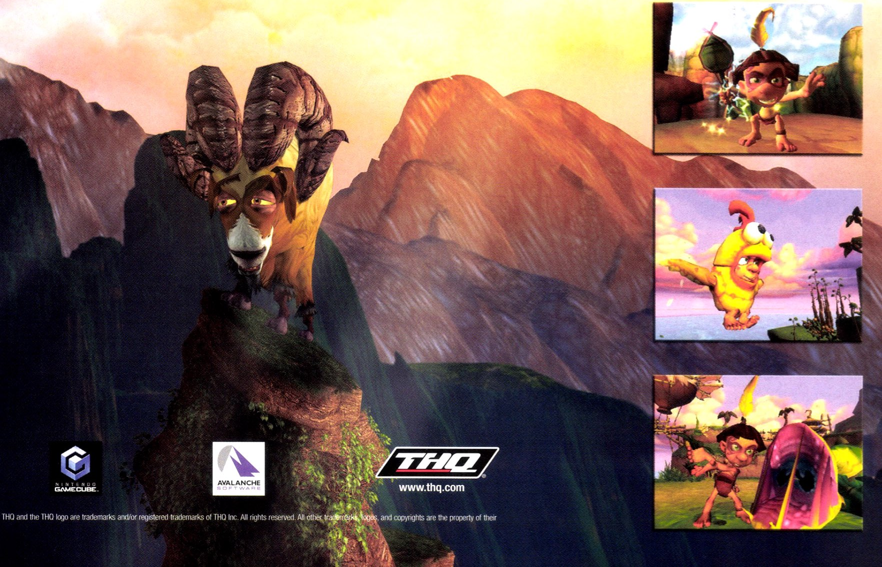
# The Prophecy foretold of a mighty warrior that would one day save the world.

That's him in the chicken suit.



NINTENDO GAMECUBE

AVALANCHE SOFTWARE

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# The mission is official. Revenge is personal.

MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
Mild Language
Violence

PlayStation 2

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

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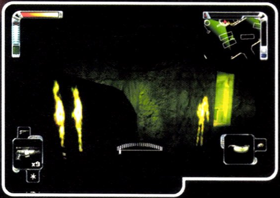
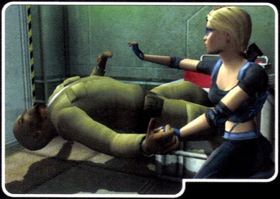
*Extensive arsenal of weapons: crossbow, throwing stars, sniper rifle, frag grenade, silenced pistol and more*

*8 action-packed missions in 8 diverse environments test your ability to survive- and succeed - in any situation*



*Cutting-edge spy tools, including V.I.S.E.R., flycam, thermal optical camouflage, retina scanner and adrenaline boost*



*Covert moves let you suspend from ceilings, hide in shadows or inside objects, and slide against walls to peer around corners*

Nikki Connors lost everything when the world's most brutal terrorist organization killed her family. Now she's a member of Phoenix, a covert agency dedicated to counter-terrorism – but she also has a mission of her own: revenge. With unsurpassed skills, weapons, and tools for concealment, she's ready to settle the score.

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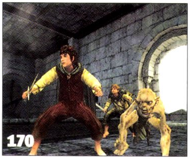


## REVIEWS

### PS2 GAMES

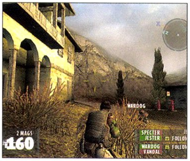
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 168 | Backyard Wrestling | ★★½ |
| 180 | Beyond Good & Evil | ★★★★ |
| 152 | Bionicle | ★★½ |
| 152 | Bloody Roar 4 | ★ |
| 156 | Culdcept | ★★★½ |
| 156 | Dynasty Warriors 4: XL | ★★★½ |
| 182 | ESPN NBA Basketball | ★★★★★ |
| 156 | FIFA 2004 | ★★★★★ |
| 149 | Final Fantasy X-2 | ★★★★★ |
| 162 | Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance | ★★ |
| 178 | Harry Potter: Quidditch | ★★★ |
| 162 | I-Ninja | ★★★½ |
| 162 | Karaoke Revolution | ★★★★ |
| 164 | Kill.Switch | ★★★★½ |
| 170 | The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King | ★★★★★ |
| 164 | Metal Arms: Glitch in the System | ★★★★ |
| 164 | Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space | ★ |
| 168 | Monster Rancher 4 | ★★★½ |
| 182 | NBA Jam 2004 | ★★½ |
| 182 | NBA Live 2004 | ★★★★½ |
| 183 | NBA ShootOut 2004 | ★★★ |
| 166 | Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time | ★★★★★ |
| 154 | Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando | ★★★★★ |
| 172 | Rogue Ops | ★★½ |
| 176 | Secret Weapons Over Normandy | ★★★★ |
| 160 | SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs | ★★★★★ |
| 172 | Space Channel 5 Special Ed. | ★★★½ |
| 172 | Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy | ★★★½ |
| 153 | SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom | ★★★★½ |
| 176 | Star Trek: Shattered Universe | ★★ |
| 178 | Tak and the Power of Juju | ★★★½ |
| 152 | Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles | ★★½ |
| 174 | XIII | ★★★½ |

### PS1 GAMES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 184 | Ford Truck Mania | ★★ |
| 184 | Tall: Infinity | ★½ |

### PERIPHERALS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 184 | 7.0 TFT Universal GameScreen | ★★★½ |
| 184 | Chameleon Wireless | ★★★★½ |
| 184 | Extreme Action | ★★★ |
| 184 | Soul Calibur II Universal Arcade Stick | ★★½ |
| 184 | USB Headset | ★★★★ |
| 184 | Wireless Net Extender | ★★★★½ |



**ON THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE PS2 DVD**

### PLAYGROUND
Final Fantasy X-2
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence
XIII
Need For Speed Underground
Secret Weapons Over Normandy
I-Ninja
NCAA GameBreaker 2004
NFL GameDay 2004

### VIDEOS
Haunted Mansion
Disgaea
Backyard Wrestling:
  Don't Try This At Home
True Crime (commercial)
Madden NFL 2004 (commercial)

### STORIES
Final Fantasy X-2
Eternal Calm (FFX-2 prologue)
Behind the Scenes of
  the Haunted Mansion movie

### DOWNLOADS
Mad Maestro
Midnight Club 2

**PLAYSTATION UNDERGROUND TEAM**
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Marketing Team **Kim Yuen, Steve Williams, Jesse Caid**
Executive Producers **Andrew House, Marilyn Weyant**
Format Q&A **Sam Bradley, DeMarlo King**
Account Coordinator **Eric Ippolito**

**PROGRAMMING AND INTERFACE ARTWORK BY LIFELIKE PRODUCTIONS, INC.**
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3D Artists **Jason Robinson, Philip Williamson, David Hayes**
Producer **Jessi Harrison**
President **Katherine Williams**
Technical Director **Tim Edwards**

**SPECIAL THANKS**
**Maimoona Block, Kirsten Costello, Tom Gillan, Michelle Manahan, Gerald Martin, Jim Williams**

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Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "OPM Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

Also, if you have a malfunctioning or non-working demo disc, call EDS at 1-800-627-6458. They will provide instructions to obtain repair or replacement services.

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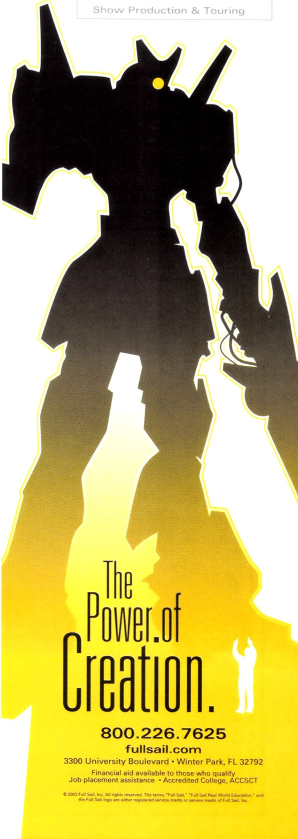
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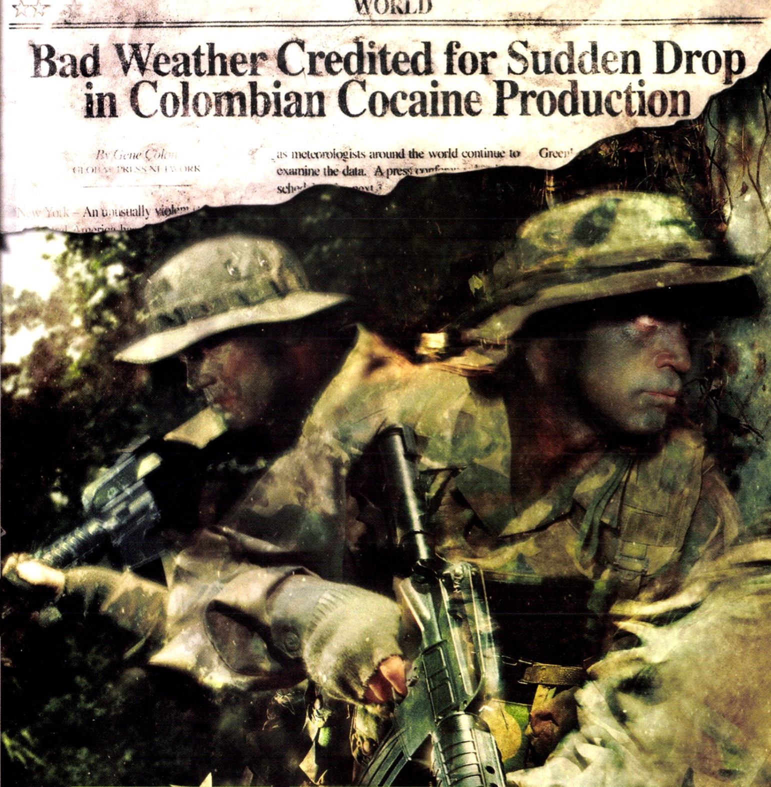


WORLD

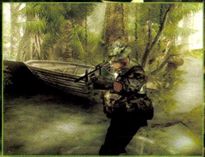
# Bad Weather Credited for Sudden Drop in Colombian Cocaine Production

*By Gene Colon*
GLOBAL PRESS NETWORK

New York – An unusually violent

as meteorologists around the world continue to examine the data. A press conference

Green



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# REVIEWS

Making the world a more perfect place.

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

## PRINCELY

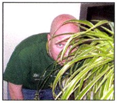
### A time to kick ass

Rarely has such a classic game gotten such a spectacular upgrade. That's one of the reasons *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* is our Game of the Month.

## MEET THE CRITICS

**JOHN DAVISON**
John and his wife Andrea gave birth to their son William on September 14.
**Current Favorites:** *SSX 3, Prince of Persia, SOCOM II*
**Favorite Genres:** Driving, racing, hitting stuff

**GARY STEINMAN**
Gary was gonna complain about how hard he's been working, but he realized his job is still better than yours.
**Current Favorites:** *FFX-2, Going Commando, BG&E*
**Favorite Genre:** RPG



**JOE RYBICKI**
*SOCOM II*'s improved ground cover has taught Joe the value of remaining unseen.
**Current Favorites:** *SOCOM II, POP: TSOT, School of Rock*
**Favorite Genres:** Puzzle, Adventure, Gary Smells

**CHRIS BAKER**
C-Bake estimates he slew around 12,892 skeletons, orcs, Foot ninja, and old Chinese dudes this month.
**Current Favorites:** *LOTR: Return of the King, DW4: XL*
**Favorite Genre:** Action

**THIERRY (SCOOTER) NGUYEN**
Scooter went to Hawaii, so Gary cast a curse that turned him into a monkey.
**Current Favorites:** *Metal Arms, R&C2, LOTR: ROTK*
**Favorite Genres:** FPSing, RPGing, Monkeying, Robots

**GIANCARLO VARANINI**
The September earthquake only reaffirmed Giancarlo's belief that Japan...rocks.
**Current Favorites:** *ESPN Basketball, Castlevania, SC II*
**Favorite Genres:** Action, Sports, Robot Ninja Dogs

## REVIEWS

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|---|---|---|
| **PS2 GAMES** | | |
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| **184** | Tall: Infinity | ★½ |
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| **184** | Extreme Action | ★★★ |
| **184** | Soul Calibur II Universal Arcade Stick | ★★½ |
| **184** | USB Headset | ★★★★ |
| **184** | Wireless Net Extender | ★★★★½ |

154
JUMP!
Prepare for platform bliss
*Ratchet* ratchets up the fun

160
FIRE!
Better call for a medic
*SOCOM II* will kick your ass

170
FIGHT!
One *Ring* to rule the mall
*Return of the King* rocks!

5-STAR AWARD
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

# FINAL FANTASY X-2

## Get into the groove

**Publisher:** Square Enix U.S.A. **Developer:** Square Enix **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

I don't usually like to waste your time with an extended discussion of how I arrived at my score, but in this case it's actually relevant. So indulge me.

For the past month, I've had a running argument rattling around my brain: *Should* FFX-2 *get a 4.5 or a 5*? In other words, *Am I really enjoying this as much as I think I am?*

I get the feeling a lot of you will be wondering the same thing. Now, I'm not talking about the score—that's my job, thank you very much. I'm referring to how you might struggle with the fact that you really love this game, tossing up all kinds of mental roadblocks while you're playing. *It's too silly. It's too girly. It's not my* Final Fantasy.

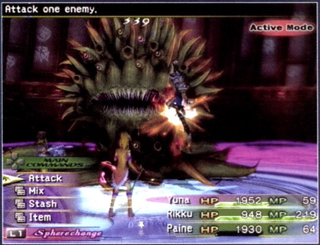
Whatever.

*FFX-2* is the most fun I've had playing a *Final Fantasy*. I'm not saying it's the greatest *Final Fantasy* ever. I still like *FFX* the best—although *FFIX* had the coolest cast of characters and *FFIV* remains my sentimental favorite. But in terms of pure fun? This one rocks.

With that in mind, here are my wrongheaded arguments against loving *FFX-2*, along with my reasons for refuting them:

**It's *just* a sequel.** Think this is merely an estrogen-heavy rehash of *FFX*? Think again. *FFX-2* is a completely different game. (Read through our feature for all the juicy details.) But if you're worried that a return trip to Spira might get tedious, have no fear. *FFX-2* gives you the best of both worlds: those warm, fuzzy feelings you get from wandering into a familiar place and stumbling across a familiar face, along with the freshness of a world rebuilt after a devastating war with Sin.

**I don't like the ATB.** Hey, I was just as happy as the rest of you to see the worn-out Active Time Battle system replaced by *FFX*'s strategic CTB combat system. But, see, this is ATB done right. The constantly ticking clock moves fast enough to make things feel frenetic yet fun. The new Chain feature lets you add all kinds of strategic (yet active) twists to the action; I found myself holding my Dual Shock in some of crazy positions, trying to quickly tap R1 while scrolling through options on the D-pad and punching X to trigger a powerful Chain. And the dress-up mode is a great take on the *Final Fantasy* job system. Like I said in the feature, you can choose among 2,744 possible party makeups, and that's with just three playable characters! I also love the way the Garment Grids let you further customize your battle setups, giving you an assortment of powered-up mini-Sphere Grids that you can activate on the fly.



Attack one enemy.

**It's too girly.** And the problem is...? Seriously, these are great characters. I love them all, and not just in my typical girly-manga-obsessed creepy way. Underneath their clothes, these young ladies have some serious backstory. There's a lot going on here, so pay attention.

**Mission-based gameplay? Blech!** Oh, you're just never gonna be happy, are ya? For years, you complain about the linear nature of *Final Fantasy*; finally, you get something non-linear and it's not good enough? Look, these missions actually open up the world of Spira. From the very beginning, you can go anywhere, do anything, see whatever you like. The mission-based gameplay also makes every segment feel unique. Each mission has a different angle, from quick-hit minigames to straight-up exploration to, er, Monkey Love (I kid you not), adding an unprecedented variety to the gameplay.

One thing to keep in mind, though: The more you put into *FFX-2*, the more you'll get in return. To experience the full story, you'll have to visit areas that don't have any highlighted missions. Search around and you're bound to trigger a story sequence or a side-quest that not only adds to the story, but rewards you with anything from a Garment Grid to a new dressphere. If you're the type who's not predisposed to exploration, you won't have as much fun. Then again, you can always replay the game, since there are multiple endings.

**It's too silly.** Lighten up.

**Bring back the summons!** The exquisite costume-change animations are more than adequate to satisfy my need for elaborate eye-candy. But if you really miss those Aeons, I'll say (without spoiling too much) that they're around...

**Shut up.** No, *you* shut up.

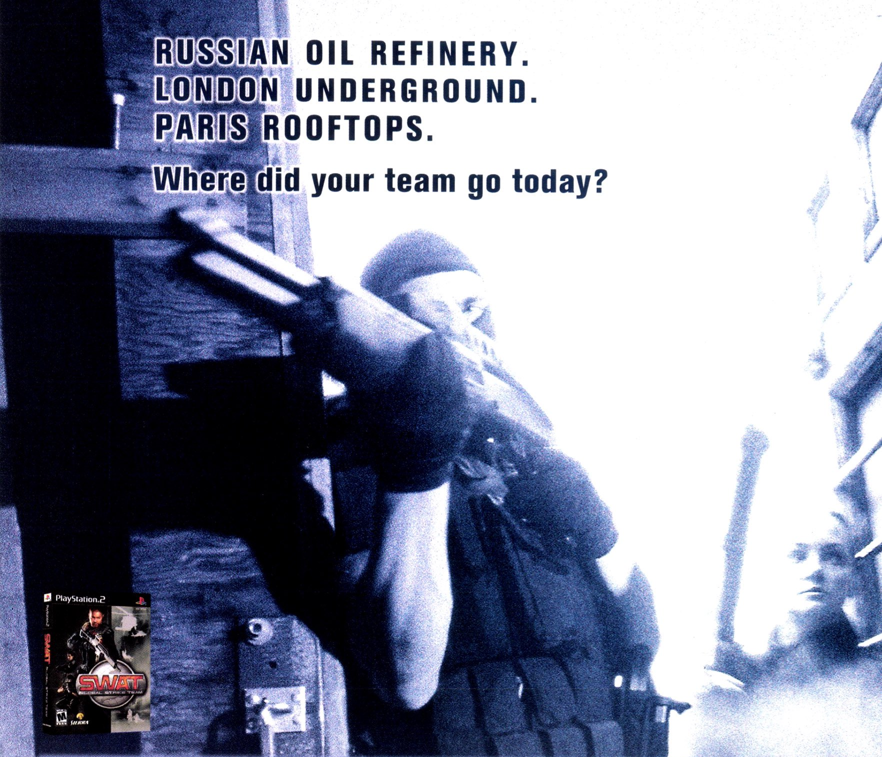
So there you have it. Read about it, try it, buy it. *Final Fantasy X-2* is brilliant. So get over yourself and have a great time.

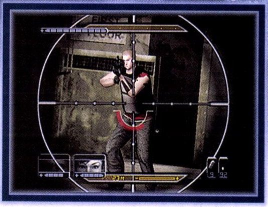
**Gary Steinman**

★★★★★

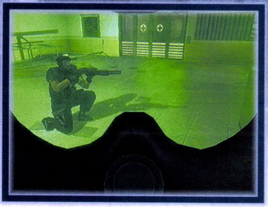
# RUSSIAN OIL REFINERY.
# LONDON UNDERGROUND.
# PARIS ROOFTOPS.

## Where did your team go today?

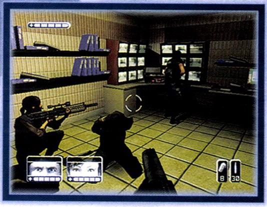




Go on hazardous missions, including hostage rescue, bomb diffusion, and surprise raids.



Use assault rifles, fiber optics, night vision, and other hi-tech SWAT weapons and gear.



Breach and clear rooms, crack computer systems, and take down the bad guys—all in a fast-paced environment.

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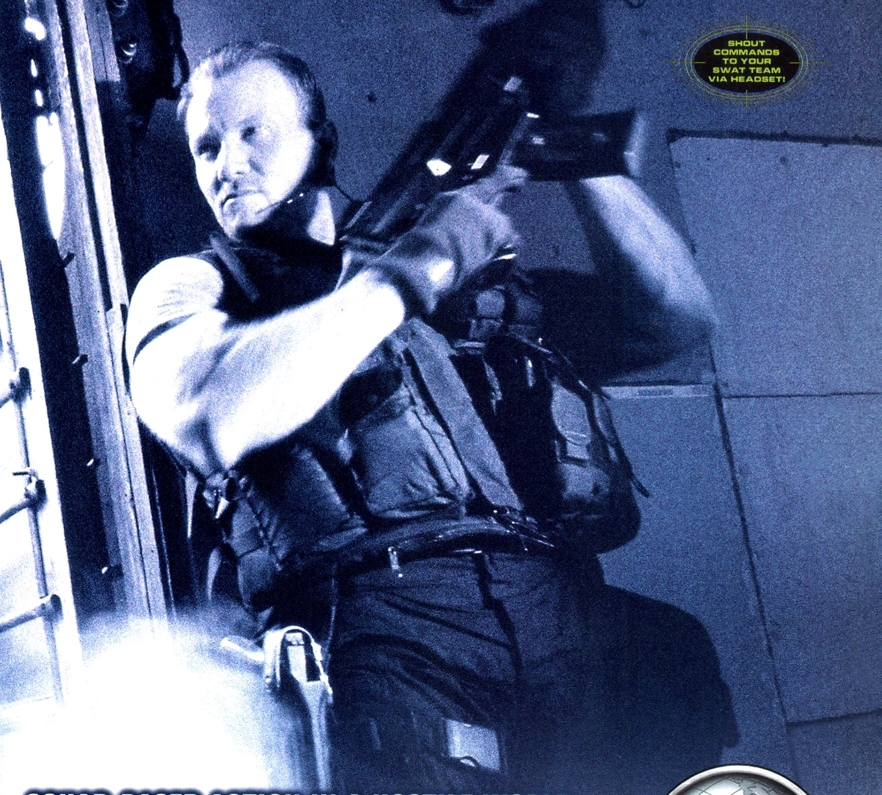
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MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Strong Language

VIVENDI UNIVERSAL games

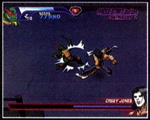
SIERRA™

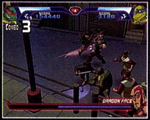
ARGONAUT

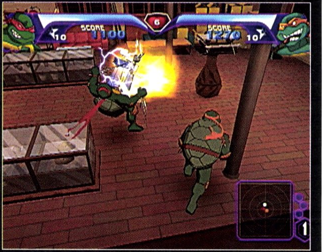
PlayStation®2

XBOX

**www.ninjaturtles.com**
Go to the official *TMNT* site for all sorts of cool stuff, like these original sketches by Kevin Eastman (left) and Peter Laird (right).







# TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

## Ooh...shell shock

**Publisher:** Konami
**Developer:** Konami
**MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Donatello may be the brainy turtle, but never accuse him of lacking a sense of humor. After using his bo staff to kick the butt of a Foot Ninja or mouser in *TMNT*, he's known to say things like, "Anyone for stickball? I have the stick, you be the ball!" Funny, yes—but it's not the kind of thing you wanna hear every few times  you hit Square.

This may sound like a silly—"Anyone for stickball?"—thing to pick on, but let me assure—"Anyone for stickball? I have"—you that repeat—"An-"—edly hearing Donnie and pals say this phrase and—"Anyone for stickball? I-"—ones like—"Any-"—it is about as enjoy—"Anyone for stickball? I have the stick, you be"—able as reading this sent—"Anyone for sti-"—ence. As you may have guessed, they often don't even feel the need to complete the phrase. And worse yet, *you can't shut them the shell up*!

It's a shame that so many little nuisances like that one have to add up against an otherwise solid beat-em-up. *TMNT* features some great controls. Each hero in a halfshell has a distinct play style based on his weapon of choice and personality. Raphael is all business with his short, quick sai, for example, while party-dude Mikey throws in some breakin' moves with every swing of his nunchaku. Great-looking cel-shaded graphics illustrate the reptilian brothers as they pull off some cool, well-animated moves in levels designed to mirror the new animated series (and yes, I watch it).

But oh, how the little things disappoint, frustrate, and annoy. For one thing, if you're assuming that four turtles means four players, think again—only two can play at once, and the second is usually weaker because, for some reason, Splinter allows only Player 1 to learn new moves. What?

Also, remember how the 1989 arcade game had you fight a few Foot Ninjas, then move on, then a few more, then move on? The new game forgets that it's this pace—not fighting drove after drove of enemies in one spot—that keeps a beat-em-up interesting. Further, invisible walls keep you from advancing, and the fact that you can't see them can lead to major damage (much like the ill-placed exploding barrels and the foes who attack from offscreen).

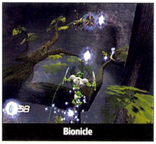
The game gets unreasonably hard near the end, where you really start to hate the archaic continue system. It frustrates me that I haven't beaten Shredder—I can't even get to him. I feel so turtle powerless.

I don't need an in-depth story for a game like this, but c'mon, Konami—this isn't 1993. At least *try* to animate your characters as they speak in cut-scenes—no, the rhythmic bop they do in unison doesn't count.

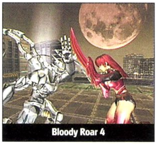
All these things just make me wanna stop playing and do something else. Stickball, anyone?

**Chris Baker**

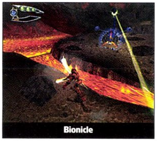
★★½



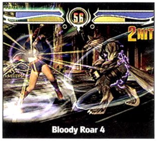
Bionicle



Bloody Roar 4



Bionicle



Bloody Roar 4

## BIONICLE

**Publisher:** Electronic Arts/Lego Interactive
**Developer:** Argonaut/Coyote
**MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

"Use the Suva to hunt for these sons of Makuta." If this tip from a blue robot chick to a green robot dude makes any sense to you, you're likely one of the millions of Lego maniacs who has made the Bionicle toy line one of the company's most successful ever. If not, the only reason for you to play this game is to revel in derivativeness.

Granted, *Bionicle* does have its fun moments, and I really like the variety of gameplay—you're doing something different in each of the eight levels. Thing is, if you've been playing games for at least a few years (and that very well might not be the case with much of this game's target audience), you've played all of these stages before. You want elemental-based levels? Fire, snow, water, and air serve as the basis of several levels. Wanna push stuff (and maybe get a little lost) in adventure areas? You do. Platform-centric stages require lots of double-jumping and collecting glowy things. At other times, you're snowboarding, grinding down tree limbs, and even cruising underground in a mine cart.

A taste of originality does exist when you absorb attacks with your defense shield to power up your own assaults. Ironically, though, this mechanic makes *Bionicle* harder—I can't see your average preteen getting past some of the game's more challenging, genuinely frustrating moments. Then again, the difficulty alone is what takes this game a solid five hours to beat. Even hardcore fans are only looking at rental for this one.

**Chris Baker**

★★½

## BLOODY ROAR 4

**Publisher:** Konami
**Developer:** Hudson
**MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Mature

I honestly can't think of any reason why you'd want to buy *Bloody Roar 4*, except perhaps that you have some bizarre desire to see a man morph into a six-foot mole and physically abuse a giant chameleon (actually that does sound kinda cool). Given the strides made in fighting-game design over the past couple of years, *BR4* is stuck in the dark ages. Its arenas are cramped, flat, and bland, and its gameplay structure is dated, boring, and laughable. It pretends to be imaginative (there's a "swinging" arena), but it always falls back on safe, boring ideas.

While *Mortal Kombat*, *Virtua Fighter*, and *Soul Calibur* force fighting gamers to really think about their strategy and also provide more-than-adequate gameplay incentives, *BR4* lets you mash the buttons to win, with no more satisfaction than seeing which stupid-looking opponent you'll face next. There's a halfhearted attempt at jazzing things up with a "Career mode" that lets you tweak abilities, but it's not on a par with its contemporaries.

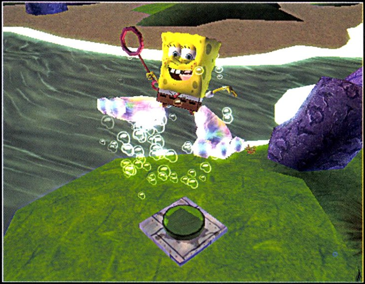
Character design in *Bloody Roar* has always been ridiculous, but *BR4*'s raise some unique questions. Why would I want to be a fighter who turns into a bunny, when I have the choice to be one who turns into a demon covered in spikes? If the hook is that you turn into a creature, why does one of the girls do no more than change into a different outfit?

There's little to redeem *BR4*. Just buy *Soul Calibur 2* instead.

**John Davison**

★

**11/19/04** is the projected release date for *SpongeBob SquarePants*, the movie.



# SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM

**Publisher:** THQ
**Developer:** Heavy Iron
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Who lives in a pineapple under the sea?
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
Absorbent and yellow and porous is he!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
If nautical nonsense be something you wish,
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
Then drop on the deck and flop like a fish!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
Whose game on PS2's better than *Tak*?
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
And for that matter, it's better than *Jak*!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob...SquarePants!*

The graphics are charming and just like the show,
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
And we bet you thought that our score would be low!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
The humor and writing is really top-notch
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
It's just like the show that we all love to watch!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
The gameplay is simple but never gets dull
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
There are plenty of puzzles on which you can mull!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob...SquarePants!*
Underwear bungee jumping is much fun!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
And tongue boarding's something that has to be done!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
SpongeBob has chums, and he thinks they are swell
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
Sandy and Patrick, you play them as well!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
Switching between them is what you must do
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
To beat evil Plankton and jump over goo!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob...SquarePants!*

It's not just for kids, it's for adults as well,
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
The gameplay and humor, it really does gel.
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
It's easily better than most of its peers
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
If you don't believe us, we'll yank on your ears!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
Try it, you'll love it, we promise it's good
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
It plays just like platform games re-a-lly should!
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob SquarePants!*
*SpongeBob...SquarePants!*

**John Davison**

★★★★½

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# RATCHET & CLANK
# GOING COMMANDO

## Guns, gadgets, and pure gaming genius

**Publisher:** Sony CEA **Developer:** Insomniac **MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

5-STAR AWARD
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

Sometimes, developers will give you all kinds of tantalizing tidbits about their titles. They'll giddily proclaim that their homegrown innovations will "change everything" or that they're "rethinking the genre" or "altering the way we play." Once in a while, it's actually true—take *Grand Theft Auto*—but quite often, it's a heaping helping of hogwash with a mere morsel of truth tossed in. Most of the time, these guys are just smoking their own dope.

For months now, we've been prattling on about the RPG-like elements in *Going Commando*. It's the message the folks at Sony and Insomniac have been delivering to us, and we've passed it on to you, primarily because we bought into it ourselves after blasting through several preview versions.

The good news? *It's all true.* The subtlest of tweaks, along with a handful of inspired but oh-so-obvious additions, have radically changed *Ratchet & Clank*, yielding a sequel that's even better than the first. It's already gotten my vote for Platformer of the Year, second year running.

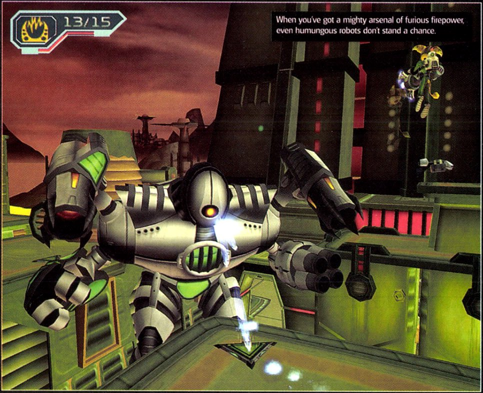
I *love* this game.

From the moment you load it up, *Commando* is instantly enjoyable. Think about it: You get to hop around, blowing the living hell out of all kinds of things (it's OK...they deserve it), in a vibrant, cartoony world that's busting at the seams with life and personality. That's gotta be fun, right? Plus, *Commando* is brilliantly balanced, thanks in no small part to its fantastic learning curve.

But fans of the first *Ratchet* already know how satisfying this game can be. So what about all that new stuff?

The biggest improvement—the RPG-style character growth—really and truly changes everything. I kid you not. Replaying a section is now a reward unto itself, since you gain experience for every enemy you kill. Stuck at a tough spot? No worries. Keep trying, and eventually you'll either get strong enough or earn enough bolts to buy a new weapon that might help you out of a particular jam.

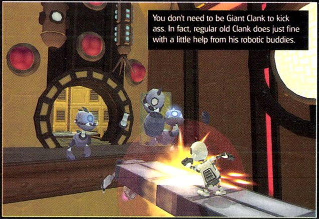
Speaking of weapons, those level up, too, giving you yet another incentive to rotate through your repertoire, trying everything, building up your arsenal of weapons into new, more powerful versions. Some of the weapon evolutions are wonderfully creative and incredibly effective. This not only adds to the game's already significant variety, but also plays a huge role in the weapons strategy. You can employ your own approach to many areas, using different combinations of guns, gadgets, and gaming skills to get by. Play *Commando* at the same time as a pal of yours, and you're sure to have some very different experiences. Weapons strategy is essential, but there's never just one right answer for any situation. That rocks.



When you've got a mighty arsenal of furious firepower, even humungous robots don't stand a chance.

Insomniac also implemented a few small fixes that make a big difference. Strafing, for example, lets you focus on your killing spree without worrying about the camera going gonzo. The characters have also grown up somewhat, becoming a bit more appealing in the process (Ratchet is less judgmental, Clank is more so). And the engaging array of clever gadgets, as well as the selection of full-featured minigames, add a lot of extra spice to this already tasty dish.

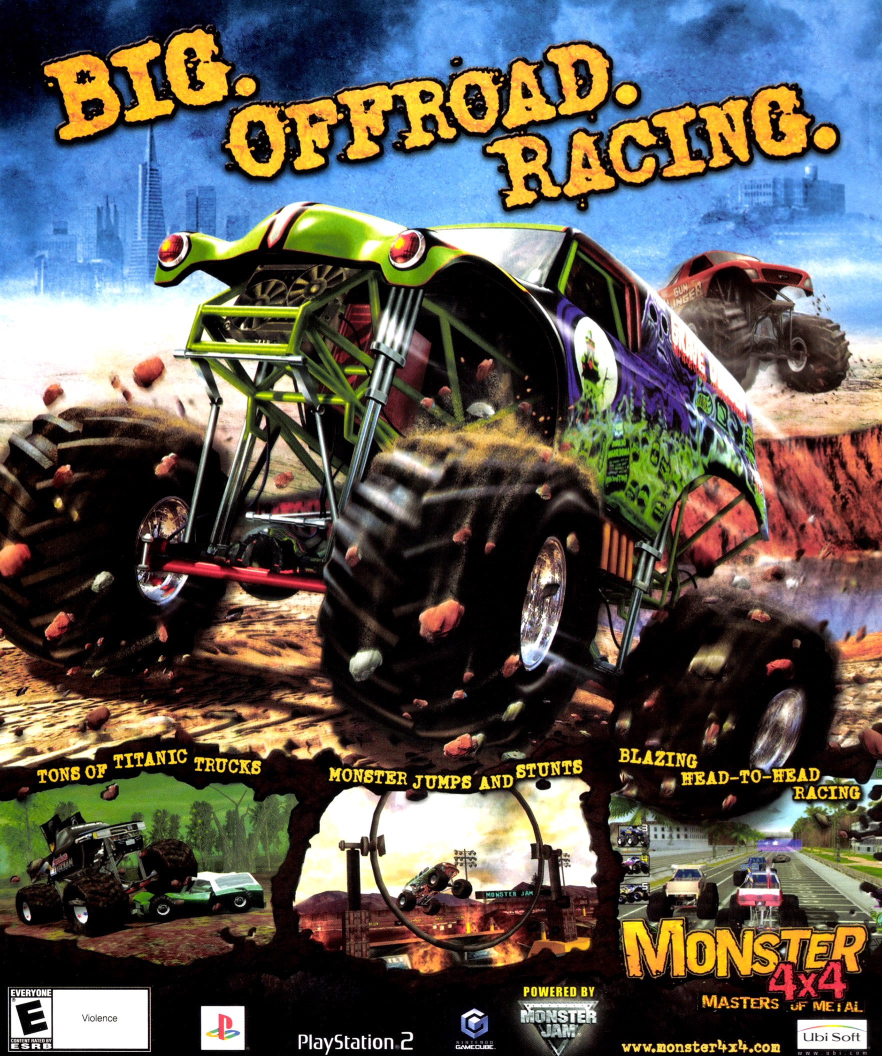
But the best thing about *Commando*? It never forgets it's a game. Take the Clank solo missions. Consider the wonderful absurdity of running into a Hammer Bot ("Use it to hammer objects") right near a point where you have to...hammer something! Insomniac obviously worked hard to create a game that rethinks the platform genre, but it still knows how to have a good time, tossing a wink and a nod at fellow gamers who also know what this is all about: fun.


You don't need to be Giant Clank to kick ass. In fact, regular old Clank does just fine with a little help from his robotic buddies.

Man, I *really* love this game.

**Gary Steinman**

★★★★★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90°
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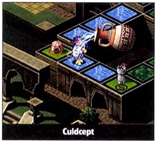
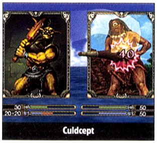
20°
0°
20°

**REMEMBER WHEN?**
Capcom released its own Three Kingdoms game back in the NES days. *Destiny of an Emperor* played like *Final Fantasy*.


Culdcept



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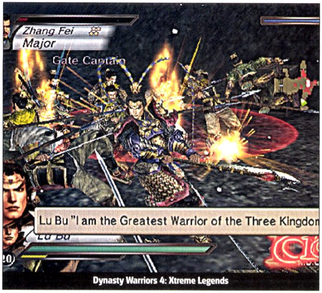
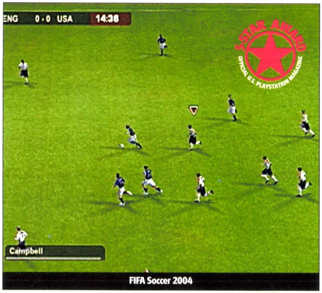


Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends



FIFA Soccer 2004

## CULDCEPT

**Publisher:** NEC Interchannel
**Developer:** Omiya Soft
**MSRP:** $3999 **ESRB:** Teen

Do you like *Monopoly* but wish it featured more fantasy trappings and colorful cards? Well, has NEC got a deal for you with *Culdcept*.

Despite the presence of a 60-page in-game manual, *Culdcept* isn't nearly as complicated as it seems at first glance; essentially, you take over spaces on the board and then spend money to raise their total value. The more spaces of a certain type you own, the more valuable every one of those spaces becomes. Is any of this sounding familiar yet? The twist in the basic *Monopoly* format is the use of creature, item, and spell cards to maintain your hold on the properties you've taken.

The result is, as these things tend to be, variably enjoyable depending on whether you're playing against people or the computer. There's a goofy Story mode for single player, wherein the world's oddest mentor figure (a kind of wizened, humanoid worm) leads you around a map as you thwart evildoers and save the world through playing board games. The multiplayer mode is more traditional, but at least it doesn't have a CPU opponent that seems to give itself the best draws and rolls on every turn.

Both modes, though, are enhanced by very nice graphics for a game of this sort, including some keen card art. (Though some of it is pretty risqué, so know what you're getting into before inviting the whole family to join in.) Anyone who liked *Top Shop* on PS1 should check this out.

**Nich Maragos**

★★★½

## DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS

**Publisher:** Koei
**Developer:** OmegaForce
**MSRP:** $2999 **ESRB:** Teen

It's easy to write off *Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends* as "just an expansion pack" to one of the greatest, most epic hack-n-slash games ever—and in some ways, that's fair. Given a choice between owning only *Xtreme* and owning only the original *Dynasty 4* released last spring (unlike most PC expansion packs, you don't need the core game to play *Xtreme*), you're still getting a better package with the older choice. But this one is worth picking up, too.

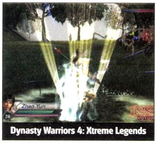
Defeating the new Legends mode with each of the game's 42 characters easily offers well over 10 hours of gameplay in itself. In this mode, each Three Kingdoms badass is confronted with a single, wholly unique mission based (loosely, have no doubt) on Chinese history, where it's quite literally he or she against hundreds upon hundreds of enemies...with minimal help. A powered-up character from *Dynasty 4* makes things considerably easier; without one, you might find yourself switching the difficulty to Easy just so you stand a chance.

The other new mode of note, Xtreme, sort of combines the "buy stuff" element of adventure games with the concept of Survival mode in a fighting game: Choose your character and continue fighting a series of randomly generated, somewhat smaller battles until he dies. Your health doesn't regenerate between battles, so it's imperative to use the points you've earned to buy health and other power-ups between skirmishes. You can even get other characters to join your cause by performing specific tasks for them in a given battle. I love the idea behind Xtreme mode, but there's a catch: Since everything's random (and maybe even because this *is* "just an expansion pack"), you're not getting any story here, nor do you have any sort of ending to look forward to. You just go until you bite it. It sort of feels like a really deep arcade game, which might be perfect for anyone who just wants to kick butt for an hour or so every so often.

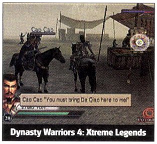
The rest of *Xtreme*'s additions are kind of nice, but no big deal: new arena challenges, the ability to make your maxed-out characters even stronger, new difficulty levels...that kind of thing. *Dynasty Warriors* maniacs (i.e., people like me) will love it. The rest of you should only bother if you'd rather pay 20 bucks less for a stripped-down version of what the full game has to offer.

**Chris Baker**

★★★½



Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends



Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends

## FIFA SOCCER 2004

**Publisher:** EA Sports
**Developer:** EA Sports
**MSRP:** $4999 **ESRB:** Everyone

It was only a matter of time before *FIFA* got the full-on *Madden* treatment, and now it's finally happened. Every year things have improved, but the franchise has never quite had the same kick behind it as its stablemate. This year sees the most comprehensive overhaul of the game that I can remember seeing in a long time, and it ably exemplifies the dramatic differences between EA Sports' approach to the game, and that of Konami with *Winning Eleven*.

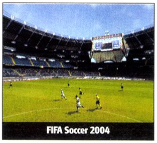
The new features *FIFA* boasts would take forever to list, so here are the most significant. First, it has online play now—and all of the lobby-related goodness that we now come to expect from EA Sports. Second, there's a new "off the ball" control method (and they've even trademarked the term "Off The Ball") that lets you hold down a shoulder button and move a player into place while the other retains possession. Initially it makes you feel like you're splitting your brain in two, but with practice it's incredibly intuitive. Third, there's a full-on manager mode now, and a much more complex career mode, which is similar to that in *Madden*. You run everything from training schedules to tactics and even budgets, and playing through just one season in this mode is the sort of thing that will require time off from school or work in order to really sink your teeth into. It's almost too much of a time investment, really, but it's incredibly deep. Finally, EA Sports has upped the licensing ante with 16 leagues comprising over *15,000* players. If you have kids who play soccer every other Saturday, there's a chance they're in here somewhere.

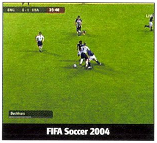
With such a spectacularly comprehensive approach to the sport and the business that surrounds it, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the intimacy of the game was lost. *Winning Eleven* has always bested *FIFA* in this regard, and I think at a push, it still does. That said, with all of the new stuff piled on top of the game in *FIFA*, it's admirable to see such a major reworking of the way it plays. The sensation of *FIFA* "playing itself" is pretty much gone, and it's clear that the A.I. has been seriously overhauled.

The answer to "*Winning Eleven* or *FIFA*?" is now purely a matter of taste. Both are excellent for different reasons, but if you want to fully immerse yourself in soccer culture, *FIFA* is pretty incredible.

**John Davison**

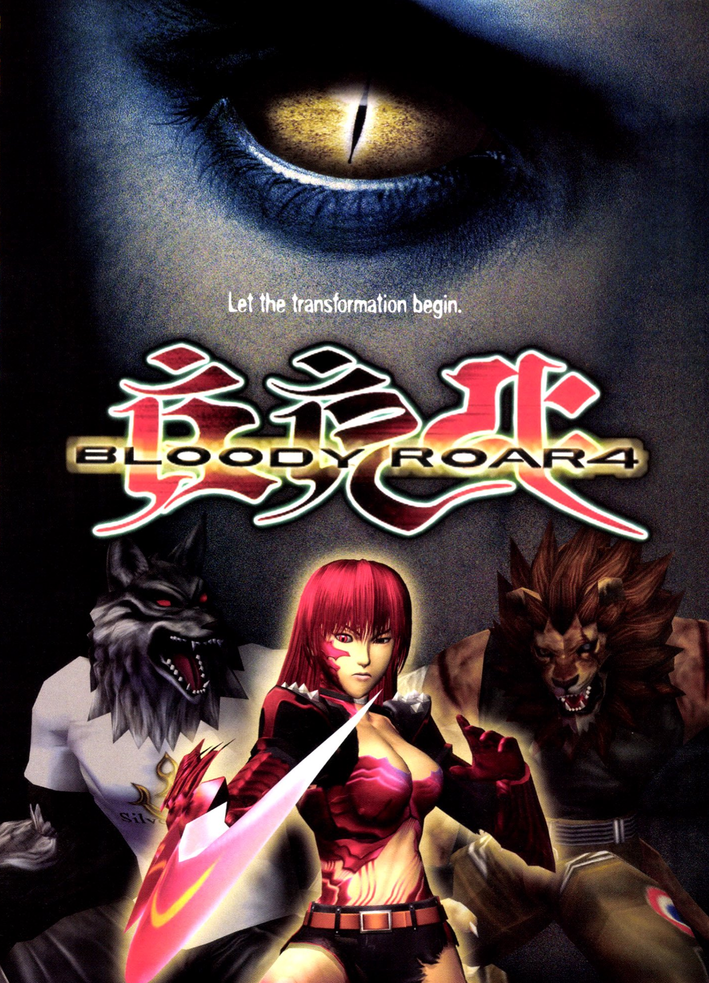
★★★★★


FIFA Soccer 2004



FIFA Soccer 2004

2 HITS
PRESS START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and it's darker and more ferocious
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bloody fight. Built on a new
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has new characters, deadlier
combos, faster action and the
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MATURE 17+
M
Blood
Violence
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CRIMINAL INTE
FUGITIVE RECOVERY
FUGITIVE HUNTER

MATURE 17+

M

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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STRONG LANGUAGE
VIOLENCE

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PlayStation 2

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### GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

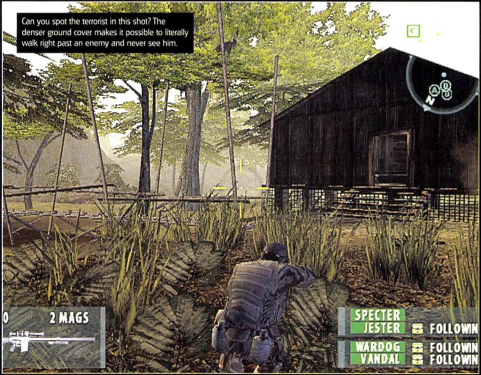
*Green Mile* star Michael Clarke Duncan is the voice of one of your teammates in *SOCOM II*. Unfortunately, he's really, really bad at it.

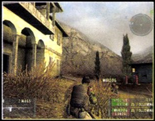
# SOCOM II
# U.S. NAVY SEALS

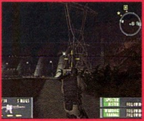
## All we could have asked for, and more

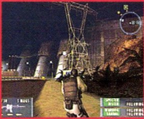
5-STAR AWARD
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

**Publisher:** Sony CEA **Developer:** Zipper Interactive **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature


Can you spot the terrorist in this shot? The denser ground cover makes it possible to literally walk right past an enemy and never see him.







### TROMPE L'OEIL

**A lighter shade of dark**

*SOCOM II* has an effect which causes dark areas to brighten as though your eyes were adjusting to the dark. You should wait for the adjustment when moving from daylight into a dark area; otherwise, you won't see that man in black. Or the gun he's pointing at you.

Stop for a moment and make a list of everything you would have liked to have seen done better in the first *SOCOM*. OK, time's up, pencils down. Let's take a look at your list.

Does it include things like smarter enemies and teammates? Does it include better voice recognition and handling of voice chat in online play? How about bigger, more detailed, more realistic levels? Are online buddy lists on there? How about deeper options for setting up a game online? Denser foliage to hide in? A wider array of weapons? I'm sure some of you crazy bastards put stuff like rocket launchers and respawning and retooled versions of the original online maps.

Well, guess what? If you have any of these things on your list, *SOCOM II* is going to make you one happy camper. No, Zipper didn't read your minds; they just read your messages—you know, the ones you posted in places like magazine message boards that you think developers never read.

Let's start with the one-player mode: Mission structure is now much deeper and more varied. You might start off with just a few basic objectives, but these branch out, opening new primary and secondary objectives as you go on. (And while we're on the topic, there are a *lot* more secondary objectives, which will have the obsessives among us working even harder to get everything *just* right.)

There are also a bunch of bonus objectives that will carry over from mission to mission; some levels will have just one bonus objective, others might have three or four. These contribute to your overall grade—which is now much more detailed, by the way. You get very specific stats of how you did (both single player and online), which make it much easier to try for a higher grade the next time around.

The whole game also has a lot more personality—for example, if you're stealthy, you'll overhear enemy conversations all over the place. These can offer important information or be completely irrelevant (and often comical). All the A.I. characters have a lot more depth—and a lot more intelligence (although on the easiest difficulty, they still seem a little clueless).

Your team is a lot smarter, too; members now listen to what you tell them. They'll get in your way from time to time, but generally, they're really good about anticipating what you're asking of them.

And then there's the online mode. Holy crap, it's awesome. The new levels, with the exception of maybe one or two, are just incredible; they're designed in such a way that you *want* to try to rescue the hostages or blow up the enemy base—not just kill all the bad men. And the new options for setting up a game are most welcome: You can queue up as many maps as you want, you can set game length and number of rounds required to win, and you can make adjustments to available weapons (e.g., sniper rifles only, no explosives, pistols only). And yes, you can even choose to allow respawning (on Suppression maps only, though).

In short, *SOCOM II* has addressed nearly every complaint I had about the first game, and added a bunch of new features on top of that. If you like the first game at all, run—don't walk, *run*—to get this game. I'll see you online.

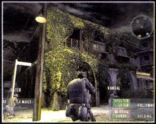
**Joe Rybicki**

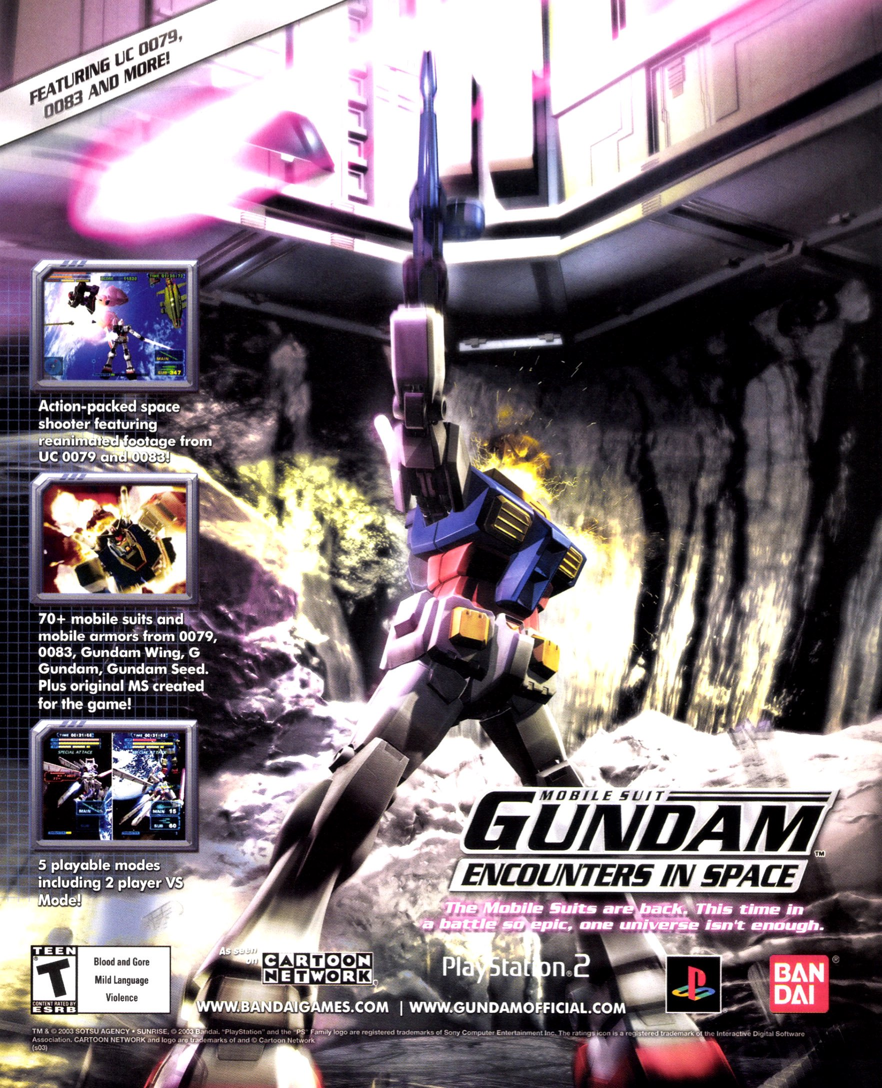
★★★★★

### KILL ZONES

**But...but...I *hit* you!**

When you first go online with *SOCOM II*, it may seem like it takes many more shots to bring an enemy down. This is because the game uses a new system of hit zones: Now a hit to the arm or leg does much less damage than a hit to the torso or head. This has a couple ramifications for online play. First, it strongly encourages burst fire instead of full-auto mode, because the longer you fire an automatic weapon in full auto, the worse your aim gets. It also means that your brand-new shotgun isn't quite the powerhouse it seems, since you'll need to get right next to an enemy for him to take the full brunt of the shot.

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## ENCOUNTERS IN SPACE

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Mild Language
Violence

As seen on CARTOON NETWORK

PlayStation 2

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(s03)

Ninjas are mammals.

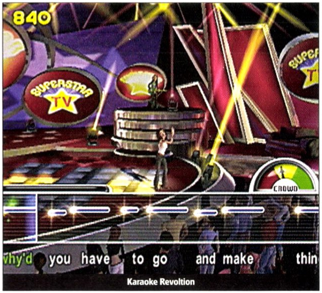
**UNLOCKABLE**

Beat *Karaoke Revolution* and you'll open up a funny video of a bunch of people trying to sing Barenaked Ladies' "One Week."

Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance

Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance

I-Ninja



Karaoke Revolution

## GLADIATOR: SWORD OF VENGEANCE

**Publisher:** Acclaim
**Developer:** Acclaim Studios Manchester
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature

If you're like me, you can usually tell within the first few minutes of a game whether or not you're going to love or hate it. *Gladiator* is an exception to that rule.

The opening sequence is quick-paced and gives an overall feeling of triumph as you hack-n-slash through teams of other gladiators in front of an enthusiastic crowd of 50,000. The new evil emperor hates you, Thrax (the fallen Emperor Trajan's greatest gladiator—all bogus history, by the way), and has thrust you into an invigorating battle royale, taunting you all the while. An epic score and cinematic camera angles further the feeling of being a polygonal Russell Crowe. But soon enough, you're thrust into a mythic land of skeletons, cyclops, and other such foes—and it's all downhill from there.

With every hack and slash you execute—and there will be *thousands* in this very gory game—the enthusiasm you felt during the first 10 minutes dwindles exponentially. You soon realize what a limited combat system ol' Thraxie boy has at his disposal—one so flawed and needlessly complicated that you never feel like you have full control. Even when you fight well, a mass of random particle effects absolutely engulfs Thrax's body; you want to fight poorly just so the effect wears off and you can *see* him. At certain points, you simply feel total frustration—you just wanna *stop* playing sometimes. Of course, you're better off never starting at all.

**Chris Baker**

★★

## I-NINJA

**Publisher:** Namco
**Developer:** Argonaut
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

I had such high hopes for *I-Ninja*. From the moment I first laid eyes on him at this year's E3, I was smitten with the game's too-cute mini-ninja. Now, after beating the game, I *still* have high hopes.

In other words, *I-Ninja* is a bit of a disappointment.

That's not to say this is a bad game. In fact, *I-Ninja* does what it does very well, offering a decent challenge, a few hearty chuckles, and plenty of personality.

Unfortunately, *I-Ninja* doesn't do a heckuva lot of, well...*anything*. You can easily beat this game in a few short sessions, and you'll quickly forget about it afterward.

But, see, I still love this character. Plus, Argonaut has proven it can make a polished (if derivative) platformer that has the *potential* to stand with the big boys. So here's my plea to hardcore platform fanatics and, uh, rich kids everywhere: Buy this game. For me. If only so I can see a sequel.

Here's what you'll get: Five worlds, each with a handful of levels. (I think there's about 20 in all, but that's not counting the bonus areas and the boss fights.) Each level is a total blast, full of just about every platformer trick under the sun: jumping segments, superfantastic ninja combat, rail grinds, *Sonic*-esque speed tracks, more jumping bits, ninja bowling (think Sega's *Super Monkey Ball*, but with a ninja at the helm, mowing down waves of enemy ninja), ninja wall-running, more jumpy bits, a few shooting segments, some clever puzzles, ninja robot battles, ninja factories, a visit to the moon (naturally), and—you guessed it!—even more jumpy bits.

Not bad for a few bucks, but keep in mind that each level is pretty darn derivative, and the levels in each world are all fairly similar. Plus, you're forced to replay these levels almost immediately, since you need to earn "belts" to unlock later levels. Granted, you'll have to overcome a new set of challenges—defeat *X* number of enemies, complete in *X* amount of time—but that's not enough to keep it fresh. Replay value is a very good thing—but forced replay, early and often, definitely is not.

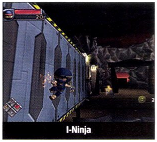
So although *I-Ninja* is a raucous romp while it lasts, there just isn't enough to it. It's the perfect rental, but a marginal purchase at best.

But you're gonna buy it anyway, right? For me? I really want to see a sequel that lets my favorite ninja shine as brightly as he deserves!

**Gary Steinman**

★★★½

I-Ninja



I-Ninja

## KARAOKE REVOLUTION

**Publisher:** Konami
**Developer:** Harmonix
**MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

*Karaoke Revolution* is more than I expected, but less than I wanted.

It's more than I expected because the collection of songs is really quite spectacular. Looking at the list, you may think there's a lot of songs you wouldn't really care about. Truth be told, you're probably right. But I bet you'd be interested in at least 25 percent of the tunes, and that 25 percent is significant because in Showtime mode (the central "career" mode of the game), you get to choose one of four songs for each stage. Those four songs have been very carefully selected so that at least one in each stage should be something with which you have at least a passing familiarity. In fact, there was only one stage in which I really had to fake it through a song, and that's only because I don't listen to the radio enough (more specifically, not at all) to have any kind of knowledge of Michelle Branch.

But that leads me to the only disappointment of the game. As a singer without any formal training (those who have heard me sing can attest to that), I was expecting *Karaoke Revolution* to both challenge and train me—that is, I expected to have some difficulty, at least on the higher challenge levels, that could only be overcome by *becoming a better singer*.

No such luck. Even with my just-passable singing skill, I was able to breeze through the game on Expert difficulty in the time it took to play through each one of the songs. And that's even with fudging my way through that Michelle Branch song.

See, as long as you're roughly in pitch, you can get by. "Roughly in pitch" is defined more strictly in the higher difficulty levels, but it's still a fairly wide range. And you don't even have to sing the right words; c.bake pointed out that you can hum your way through "It's the End of the World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" and earn a nearly perfect score. Gary also demonstrated this admirably by professing his love for Giancarlo, loudly and often, throughout a stirring rendition of "Like a Virgin."

As you can probably imagine, though, *Karaoke Revolution* is one hell of a party game. If you like music and you have friends who like music, don't even think about it—buy this. It won't matter if you or your friends can sing; it's more fun if you can't, actually. But if you're looking for a real challenge, you won't find it here.

**Joe Rybicki**

★★★★

3047
Like a vir- gin

Karaoke Revolution

2576
You're try- ing to be cool

Karaoke Revolution

# Maximize your Competitive Edge

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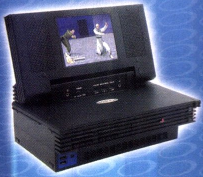
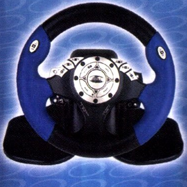
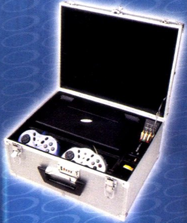


Gaming Screens

Sound Systems



Racing Wheels



Aluminum Protective Cases

## Maximum Gaming

For PlayStation® 2

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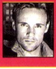
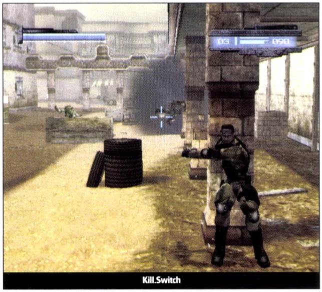
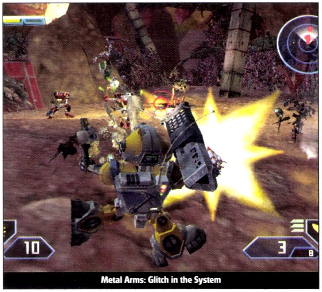
Foul-mouthed robots are funny.

**SMALL WORLD**
Kirby Morrow, who played Trowa Barton in the *Gundam* T.V. series, also played Cyclops in *X-Men: Evolution*.

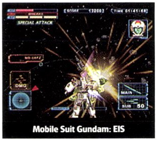




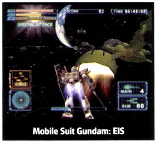
Kill.Switch



Metal Arms: Glitch in the System



Mobile Suit Gundam: EIS



Mobile Suit Gundam: EIS

## KILL.SWITCH

**Publisher:** Namco
**Developer:** Namco
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

I have to admit to being utterly ambivalent to the whole idea of this game until recently. Since we first saw details about the game, I've feared that it's nothing more than a one-trick pony. The trick? The much-ballyhooed shooting-around-corners-without-looking thing. It's a neat idea, but so what? Surely it's just a gimmick? Well...no.

*Kill.Switch* isn't a *Metal Gear* clone, nor is it a *Splinter Cell* or a *Syphon Filter* wannabe. It's a shooter, pure and simple—but it's filled with cool ideas and a control system to die for. You're not really sneaking around, but you are hiding a lot—and it's the mechanics behind the hiding that makes the game so damn satisfying.

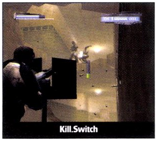
A lot of games try very hard to convey the feeling of being right in the middle of an "oh crap, I'm going to get my ass shot off" firefight, but few have captured the pace and tactics needed to survive such an encounter. *Kill.Switch* does a fantastic job though, and as you're ducking behind crates, peeping around corners, and mowing down bad guys with an assortment of weapons, there's an unbroken level of tension that few games can match. You listen for the enemy fire, wait for them to reload, come out of hiding, and open up on them. The A.I. is particularly good when it comes to the enemies' reactions to you because you can drive them nuts by just crouching behind something, poking your gun over your head, and spraying the room with bullets. Toss a grenade into a room, and they'll run away, desperate to save themselves.

In a lot of ways, *Kill.Switch* feels like it was designed as a first-person shooter and then reworked as a third-person game when the development team twigged to the whole hiding thing. Considering you can see your character, he's actually pretty soulless, and by no means as much of a focal point as Snake, Gabe, or Sam in their respective games. There is something of a twist to the game's story though, and that goes some way to explaining this. I won't spoil it for you, but ultimately, this is more than your usual "lone warrior saving the world from unspeakable evil" shtick. It's not a huge shock when the mystery is revealed, but at least you get the feeling that Namco is trying to do something a little different.

This could easily have been just another action game, but the result is far more than that.

**John Davison**

★★★★½



Kill.Switch

Kill.Switch

## METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM

**Publisher:** Vivendi Universal
**Developer:** Swingin' Ape/Mass Media
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

At first glance, *Metal Arms: Glitch in the System* looks like some sort of *Bionicle* knockoff for kiddies, but such impressions are quickly wiped away once you experience the challenging firefights and pushing-the-limits-of-the-Teen-rating dialogue. I laughed and raised my eyebrows when I heard bleeped-out profanity and some fairly shocking innuendoes (the titular Glitch, a cute little scrapper, at one point proclaims to an enemy, "I'll break your leg servos and empty my oil reserves onto your eyes").

*Metal Arms* is categorized as a third-person shooter, but "pure, difficult robot combat" is the better phrase for it. There's lots of shooting, jumping, upgrading of weapons, possessing of enemy robots, and driving, all spanning 41 levels—which translates into significantly more than just a weekend rental. But the unbelievable brutality of the enemy A.I., even in Normal mode, means the game can vacillate from challenging to downright frustrating. Yet, for all the times I was pissed off, I still felt compelled to move on to see the level, and the next weapon upgrade, enemy robot, or vehicle I could use. Plus, Multiplayer caps off the overall package nicely.

Besides its harsh difficulty and a tendency to be a little less-than-clear about mission objectives, the only other real ding against *Metal Arms* is the slowdown that occurs in particularly heavy combat. Otherwise, this is a surprisingly decent little shooter. Plus, it has *swearing robots*!

**Thierry Nguyen**

★★★★

Metal Arms: Glitch in the System

## MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: ENCOUNTERS IN SPACE

**Publisher:** Bandai
**Developer:** Bandai
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Rating Pending

This game gets one star. Let me break down that star for you.

One fourth of the star is for Char Aznable, Mobile Suit ace of the Principality of Zeon. One fourth of the star is for Hajime Katoki, designer of the MS-06F Zaku II, whose work I have always admired. One fourth is for Yoshiyuki Tomino, who is insane now, but who was a genius perhaps 20 years ago. And one fourth of the star is for the SD Sayla Mass who trots back and forth on the main loading screen.

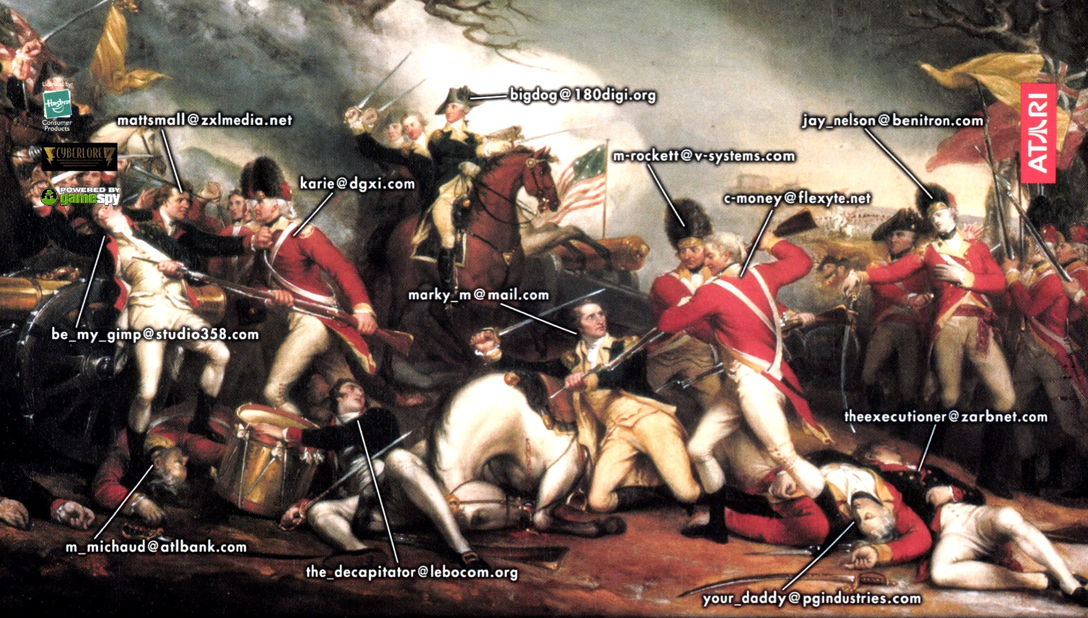
The rest of this game gets nothing, and smiles. Even if you're a hardcore *Gundam* fan and are easily duped—like the half-million geeks in Japan who bought this on launch day—you will likely still find it about as fun as a Heat Hawk to the groin. It's a railed shooter with controls so simple and limited that my initial reaction was to assume a fundamental failure of comprehension on my part.

Surely, I thought, I have more options here. Surely, I thought, the auto-aim isn't so simple. Surely, I thought, I can move the Gundam freely on the Y-axis instead of trusting to broken digital pitch controls or watching the cinematic camera move things around for me. Surely, I thought, the challenge level has a setting other than "stupid easy" or "mind-bogglingly confusing because the mutant aiming system bites."

I thought wrong. *Encounters in Space* is just that bad, with only enough finer points to deserve, as accounted for above, one star.

**Dave Smith**

★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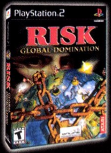
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# RISK®
## ONLINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Violence

ONLINE BROADBAND AND DIAL-UP

PlayStation.2

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★ ★ ★ ★

## MISSION DIRECTIVE

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Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands

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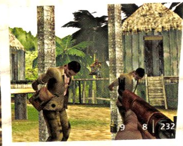
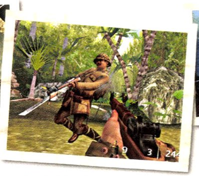
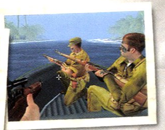
August 6, 1942 - Japanese forces have occupied much of China, Indochina, and everything in the Pacific between Australia and Hawaii. It's time to take it back, and the dense jungle island of Guadalcanal is first in line. Infiltrate the island, silence the sentries and pave the way for America's first offensive action in WW II.



Move like a shadow into enemy encampments.



Neutralize the general and experience the Banzai charge.



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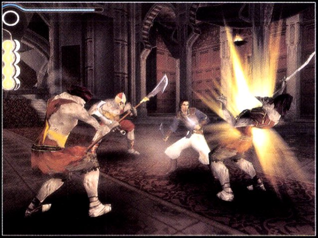
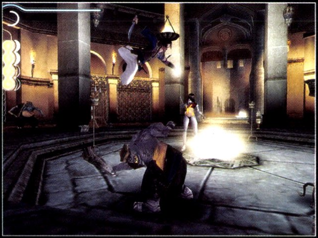
The official site for *The Sands of Time* features a special Java version of the original *Prince of Persia.*





OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE GAME OF THE MONTH

# PRINCE OF PERSIA
## THE SANDS OF TIME

### Excuse me while I pick my jaw off the floor

*Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* is one of my favorite games, ever.

I'm tempted to just stop the review there and let you experience this excellent game for yourself, but then you'd be staring at all this blank space and you'd feel like you haven't gotten your money's worth, so I suppose I'll keep going.

Just so you know, though, the rest of this review is basically going to consist of me talking about *Sands of Time* being one of my favorite games, ever. Your time would arguably be better spent getting your ass down to EB to pick up this amazing game than listening to me gush about how amazing a game it is. But hey, it's your life.

Now that we're clear on that, let's talk about graphics. I can't think of a single game that looks better. Not on PS2, not on any other system. And I'm not just talking about technology here; while the game does certainly boast a bunch of eye-popping technology, it goes way beyond that. It goes into the realm of art.

Wait, what? Art in games? I know, I was as shocked as you are. But there's a level of beauty here that can't be explained away through technology. The softened edges that hint at dust in the air, the gently filtered light, the feathery look of the palm trees...it's all so gorgeous.

Eye candy only goes so far, of course, and most of the time the gameplay doesn't match the standard set by spectacular graphics. Not so here.

Although it would be quite a stretch to call *Prince* a puzzle game, there is a certain cerebral element behind all the running-jumping-swinging gameplay. Like *Ico*, it takes a little bit of thought to figure out how to get from point A to point B. On top of that are a few genuine puzzles—they're not brain-busters, but they will probably throw you for a loop until you figure out the (in retrospect, quite simple) solution.

Unlike *Ico*, thankfully, there's a hell of a lot more action—almost to a fault, in fact. As you get deeper into the game you'll end up in the midst of battles that seem like they'll never end. Most of the time, the evolution of your skills and your comfort with using advanced techniques keeps pace with the ramped-up difficulty in battle...but there were a few moments where I felt overwhelmed. Luckily, the game is extraordinarily forgiving with saves and checkpoints, so much so that you'll never really lose more than a couple minutes of progress.

That's a good thing, because the game proved much longer than I expected. Ubisoft told us they'd estimated it at around 13 hours... but even after all the playing I did while working on last month's feature, it still took me nearly 20 hours.

Complaints? Sure, no game's perfect. I noticed a few areas where the camera went screwy, for example, and the combat can get a wee bit monotonous after awhile.

But look, if you like adventure games, you'll love this game. If you like platform games, you'll love this game. It's got story, it's got action, it's got amazing graphics and some of the best animation you'll see anywhere. It's one of my favorite games, ever. And I've been playing games for a *long* time.

**Joe Rybicki**

★★★★★

5-STAR AWARD OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

**Publisher:** Ubisoft **Developer:** Ubisoft **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

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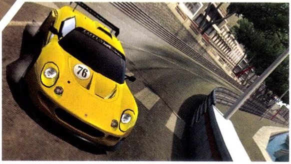

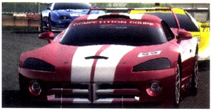

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Mild Language
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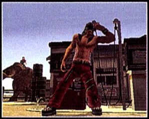
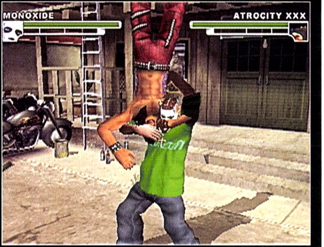
**20,000** copies of Insane Clown Posse's *Great Milekno* were sold in six hours, before being pulled from store shelves.

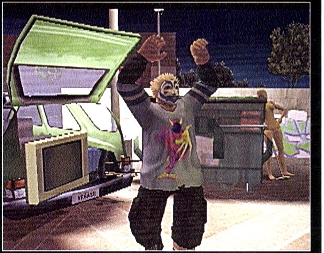




# BACKYARD WRESTLING

## Just as painful as watching the real thing

**Publisher:** Eidos
**Developer:** Paradox Entertainment
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature



Two of the most despicable phenomena in Western civilization—backyard wrestling and the Insane Clown Posse—have been combined to create Eidos' *Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home*. If you strip away the seedy premise, the game shows promise of being a knockoff of Capcom's *Power Stone*, yet it ultimately falls short of replicating the fun and intensity of the Dreamcast classic.

To *Backyard Wrestling*'s credit, the environments are well designed. Since wrestlers aren't confined to a ring, you're free to roam around the area and interact with it by climbing ladders and scaffolding or by tossing opponents into various objects, such as benches, cars, dumpsters, and tables. There are also plenty of weapons at your disposal, including barbed bats, beer bottles, and even tiki torches. Unfortunately, these items seem to have heat-seeking sensors built in since they almost always automatically make contact with your opponent, regardless of location.

All of this really doesn't mean anything in the grand scheme of things because it's not exactly a good wrestling game to begin with. *Backyard Wrestling* only features about eight basic grappling moves per character (four slams and four striking moves), as well as specials, aerial moves, and an assortment of punches and kicks. You can stick with the same grappling move throughout an entire match and have a pretty good chance of winning—even on the hardest difficulty setting. Actually, computer opponents operate in somewhat of a fixed pattern, so the same strategy can basically be used throughout the entire game, making for a thoroughly tedious experience.

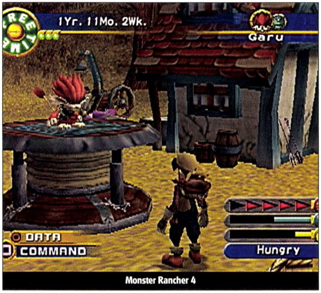
The game's extra modes don't make it any more bearable, either. There's a Talk Show mode, which serves as the traditional story mode for the game, but it's not much more than a few cut-scenes interspersed between matches. The Create-a-Wrestler mode doesn't let you create anything; all you're doing is selecting from several preconstructed characters and then choosing a costume. Sure, you can change the moves for the wrestler, but that's about the extent of the customization available.

Backyard Wrestling fans (yes, they exist) and even regular professional-wrestling fans might be able to overlook the game's shallowness because of the gratuitous violence and scantily clad women, but the novelty of setting a wrestler on fire quickly wears thin. It might be worth a rental, but don't expect to get much mileage out of it .

**Giancarlo Varanini**

★★½

STUN!
DAMAGE 100



Monster Rancher 4

## MONSTER RANCHER 4

**Publisher:** Tecmo
**Developer:** Tecmo
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Although it boasts a host of innovations that are supposed to set it a breed apart from its predecessor, *Monster Rancher 4* never captured me in the way *MR3* did.

Maybe it's the graphics. These days, I'm as bored by cel-shaded stuff as the next Gary Gamer—but back when *MR3* came out, those crisp, cartoony lines looked so good on my favorite brood of beasties (I've always loved the *Monster Rancher* universe; it blows away those dull Pokémon). *MR4* is now rendered in "real" 3D, and while it remains as cute as a Mocchi's pink belly, I'm not as captivated by this collection of critters.

But that's not it. I still can't get enough of a capering Suezo, whatever the graphical style. Rather, it's the gameplay. Granted, you can now raise multiple monsters at once. You can go on RPG-like dungeon-crawling quests. You can purchase new training equipment, and you can customize your ranch. Yet taken separately, *MR4* doesn't have a whole lot going for it. The dungeons are mediocre at best; I'd probably consider them an utter failure if they were at the heart of a straight-up RPG. And customizing your ranch is remarkably limited.

As for the monster raising, it once again boils down to...well, scheduling stuff. You know, three weeks training, one week resting, attending this tournament, eating that food. Amusing, sure, but since I don't feel that connected to my monsters, the whole thing feels like work.

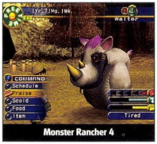
Maybe it's because *MR4* takes a big step toward letting you interact on a deeper level with you critters, but ultimately falls short. You can now walk around your ranch, doling out praise, criticism, or food, but it's basically just a real-time twist on the same old menu-based gameplay. In the end, it really only serves to highlight how much further I'd have wanted Tecmo to take the game.

Yet I can't help it—I'm a *Monster Rancher* fan. The game has an undeniable charm to it. Plus, it's a blast searching through my CDs and DVDs to spawn all these critters, looking for the occasional inside joke or obscure reference. Fans of the the series should definitely check it out.

So, yeah—I'll still play the heck out of *Monster Rancher 4*, but rather than getting lost in those multi-hour binges, I'll probably pick it up for an hour now and then, without worrying too much about the fate of my monsters.

**Gary Steinman**

★★★½



Monster Rancher 4

Garu
Postan
Fire Kick
GUTS

Monster Rancher 4

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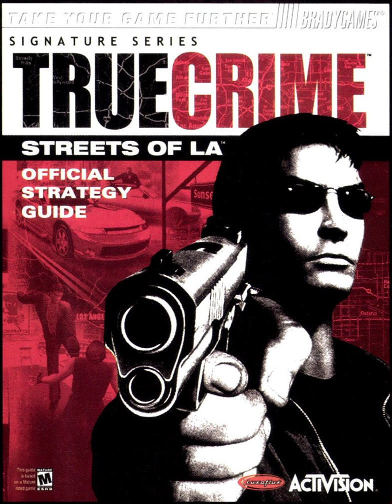
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**10/20/55** is the date on which J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Return of the King* was first published.

I've got about 650 words to sum up my thoughts on *The Return of the King*. I only need three letters:

A-w-e.

Not one of the game's 13 levels goes by without wowing you in one way or another. Right off the bat, the game throws you as Gandalf into the Battle of Helm's Deep. Fiery masses explode all around you as you learn your basic attacks, how to parry, and (new to this *Lord of the Rings* game) how to use environmental weapons, such as spears and catapults. You're immediately reminded just how satisfying orc busting can be. It would have been nice to storm in riding Shadowfax, but hey—this is still the most impressive training level you've ever seen. You know you're in for amazing eight to 10 hours to follow.

From there, you can choose one of three paths to take, all of which do a good job of spoiling events from the upcoming movie. In fact, if you haven't read the book (or at least watched the 1980 Rankin/Bass made-for-TV animated movie), I'd advise holding out on this one until you've seen Peter Jackson's upcoming film.

The first path follows Gandalf, beginning with his return to Isengard just after Helm's Deep—right during the Ents' warpath through Saruman's hood. Remember that awe I was talking about? Just imagine wielding Glamdring the Foe Hammer as walking trees traipse around you, swatting down Uruk-Hai with vegetational rage. Not to spoil anything, but the end of the level offers a pleasantly surprising climax—you'll see that the White Wizard actually played an integral role during the storming of Isengard.

From there, Gandalf defends Minas Tirith in much the same way *The Two Towers'* heroic trio held off orcs at Helm's Deep, pushing ladders off walls and all. Again, the ambient explosions and inherent feeling of urgency really get your blood flowing with sorcererous power.

Similarly, Sam and Frodo's escape from Osgiliath (the city under attack at the end of *Towers*) to kick off their path is no less exciting. Just the sight of a Nazgûl riding bareback atop an airborne fell beast—not to mention the fact that Gollum's there to help you as Mr. Gamgee skips town—is enough to make any Tolkien fan totally geek out. And they still have Shelob's spider-filled caverns, Sam's infiltration of the orc-filled tower Cirith Ungol, and the final showdown at Mount Doom to go.

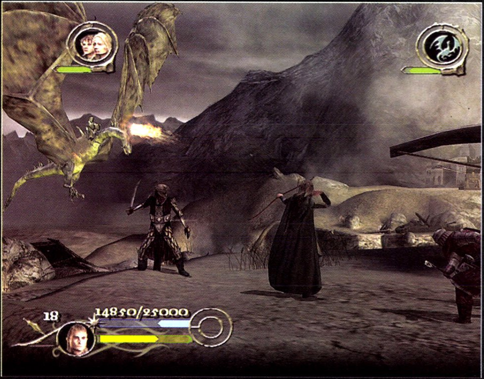
Of all the game's paths, the Aragorn/Legolas/Gimli trip made my jaw drop the most. The ghosts they fight in the Paths of the Dead levels might be pansies, but the pure ambience can't be beat. This game comes certified by THX, and surround sound really does make a difference as apparitions fly overhead, searching for a dead body to inhabit. You've never felt this creeped out in a hack-n-slash game. From there, the trio makes its way to Gondor's great city of Minas Tirith. The ensuing route involves plenty of orcs and easterlings to slice up, as well as a barrage of oliphants and the fell beast that carries the head Nazgûl on its back.

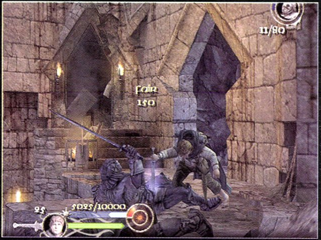
As much awe as *King* inspires, it also brings out another occasional "aw"—as in "aw, come on!" The game's cinematic camera angles make it look great, but playability sometimes suffers as a result. The boss fight with Shelob is a perfect example, as her huge arachno-ass (perfect for breeding, I'm sure) blocks your character's view as Sam tries to attack, making it really tough. Similar moments occur throughout the game, and the kill-200-orcs-before-you-pass parts can get old. Negative factors like these make me want to knock the game's score down a bit.

But I won't. *King* is the best, most synergetic convergence of film and videogame I've ever seen. It turns *Two Towers'* wow factor into an emphatic "holy freaking crap!" If the movie succeeds half as well as the game, we're in for a real treat come December 17.

**Chris Baker**

★★★★★





## MULTIPLAYER

**Double your pleasure**

If *Towers* lacked anything noticeable (besides Gandalf), it was some much-needed simultaneous two-player action. EA not only instituted co-op into *King*, but it even took it one step further: You can play the game online with a friend, voice chat and all.

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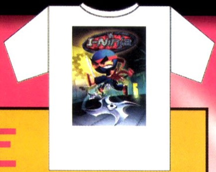

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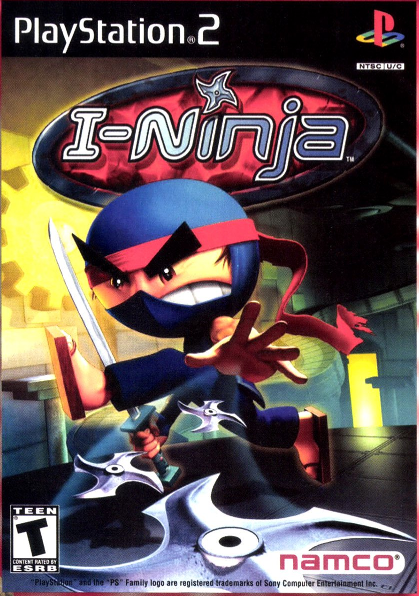
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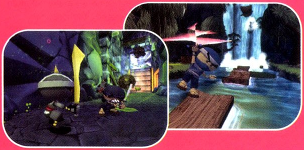

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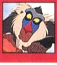
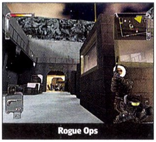
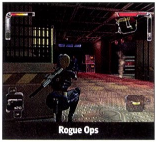
**SEPARATED AT BIRTH?**
*Sphinx*'s Imhotep (left) and *The Lion King*'s Rafiki (right). You make the call.

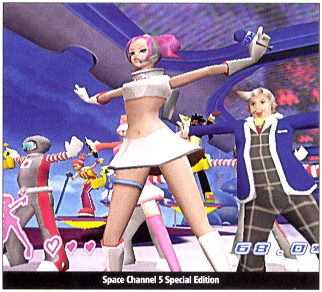




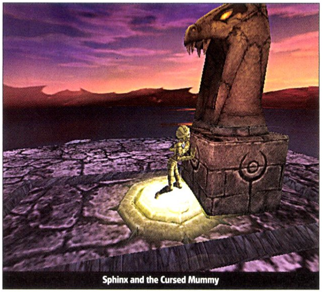
Rogue Ops



Rogue Ops



Space Channel 5 Special Edition



Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy

## ROGUE OPS

**Publisher:** Kemco
**Developer:** Bits Studios
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature

Even though stealth-oriented action games are starting to wear thin for most people, the level of tedium is usually reduced with semi-interesting stories or mechanics that introduce something new to the genre. Unfortunately, *Rogue Ops* doesn't do either. Its story revolves around a generic plot for revenge, and its stealth gameplay mechanics are rather basic and sloppy.

The game's hero, Nikki Connors, isn't even much of a superspy, due to the context-sensitive nature of her abilities. Sure, she can grab ledges, but only ones that have a special green icon displayed in front of them. The same thing applies to many of her other skills. The fact that she can't get to areas that would normally be accessible with just a small hop doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

There are some surprisingly creative moments in *Rogue Ops*, but for the most part, the mission objectives consist of running around in circles, looking for the appropriate key card to open a door. There are also some really weird less-than-intuitive puzzles, with no real indication as to what you're supposed to do. If that's not enough, the A.I. can be outrageously bad. Oftentimes, an enemy soldier will be standing right in front of Nikki and will do absolutely nothing.

*Rogue Ops* is a really basic game for the genre. It's not completely unplayable, but it has more than its fair share of problems.

**Giancarlo Varanini**

★★½

## SPACE CHANNEL 5 SPECIAL EDITION

**Publisher:** Agetec
**Developer:** Sega
**MSRP:** $29.95 **ESRB:** Teen

If you owned a Sega Dreamcast (and let's face it, you probably didn't), chances are you at least heard of this groovy, futuristic music game featuring dancing reporter Ulala and a cool, neo-'60s style. Apparently, in the future, we fight evil alien invaders with the healing power of dance. Nice to know we've become a kinder, gentler race of beings. And that miniskirts and go-go boots will eventually be back in style. Again.

The first game in the set—*Space Channel 5*—actually ain't all that great. Back when it came out on Dreamcast (three long years ago), it was sort of neat, but it hasn't stood the test of time too well. The polygon characters are stylish, but are so simplistic they look remarkably dated. Plus, they're floating over grainy full-motion video backgrounds that aren't always synced up with the action, so you get a bit of weirdness happening once in a while.

Laggy controls really hurt *SC5*, though. Ulala doesn't respond immediately to button presses, which is especially hard to deal with in a game where everything's based on keeping the beat. On top of that, *Space Channel 5* lasts only about a half an hour from start to finish, and it's a fairly simple half hour, which means you'll be putting this disc back in the box pretty fast.

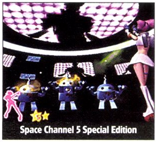
Things get better upon firing up *Part 2*, though. While the game plays almost exactly like the original, it addresses almost all the problems. Gone is the lag, the graphics are much nicer (though still not up to today's standards), and the game is a bit longer.

The key bit, though, is the variety. In her second adventure, Ulala fights many different types of enemies, has face-offs with opposing journalists that play like battles of the bands, and takes on each boss in a very unique way. The whole thing flows much better, whether you're trading shots with armed thugs or dancing along in something that looks more like a Michael Jackson video than a game. You even get a (admittedly somewhat half-assed) two-player mode, where one player controls Ulala's movements while the other controls the buttons. How could you not love it?

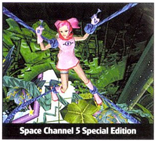
*Space Channel 5 Special Edition* isn't going to win any awards. But at 30 bucks, you could do a lot worse—like, say, buy 20 copies of *BMX XXX*.

**Greg Sewart**

★★★½



Space Channel 5 Special Edition



Space Channel 5 Special Edition

## SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY

**Publisher:** THQ
**Developer:** Eurocom
**MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

*Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy* feels less like a coherent product and more like the fusion of two disparate games. It's not as obvious a Frankenstein job as, say, *From Dusk Till Dawn* (which literally felt like two movies slapped together around an arbitrary middle)—*Sphinx* does a decent job of integrating the two protagonists and their separate journeys into a cohesive story—but while one of the stories is an incredibly clever yarn, the other is simply standard fare.

The game starts with a young, wry Sphinx—before, evidently, he became the old curmudgeon with the splinter in the foot and a propensity for telling riddles—claiming the Blade of Osiris before Imhotep sends him off to lift Set's curse from Heliopolis. Sphinx probably went to the same hero school as Link, as he runs, double-jumps, climbs, and slashes with ease. He spends his half of the game fighting foes, righting wrongs, and retrieving rarities, and also occasionally revels in minigames that suspiciously resemble *Simon Says* and *Memory*.

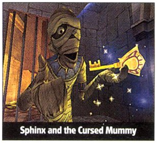
Alas, while the Sphinx portion offers standard action-adventure fare, it's bogged down by a sticky camera and the lack of an auto-lock, so fighting multiple foes in confined spaces (a frequent occurrence) gets annoying. The camera keeps on getting stuck in corners, making it hard to keep track of everything.

Tutankhamen, the aforementioned Cursed Mummy, is easily the better half of the game. Because he's dead already, the designers could craft devious (and eminently more interesting) puzzles that call for flattening, slicing, burning, or electrocuting him. The multiple abuses inflicted upon poor Tut both amuse and endear him to us. Because Tutankhamen has no combat skills (or even a lifebar), there's less annoyance with the camera—you're not often in fast-paced situations that require excellent camera control. The game could use a little more variety with regard to Tut's "death" animations, but he still easily outshines his co-star. Heck, the game should have been called "*The Cursed Mummy, and some guy named Sphinx.*"

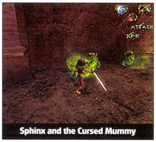
Basically, we have a four-star Cursed Mummy game held back by a three-star Sphinx game, bringing the overall game average to three-and-a-half.

**Thierry Nguyen**

★★★½



Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy



Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy

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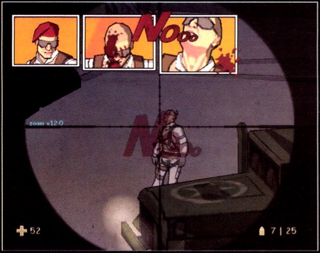
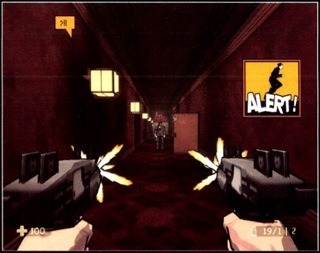
**THERE'S A WORD FOR THAT?**
Triskaidekaphobia: the irrational fear of the number 13.

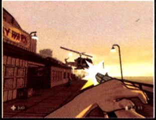
# XIII

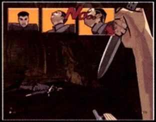
## A graphic novel that is graphic, but not so novel

**Publisher:** Ubisoft **Developer:** Ubisoft Montreal **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature









No matter what, *XIII*'s fundamental visual aesthetic is nigh irresistible. One can't help but be entranced by the cel-shaded figures, the comic-book panels, and the rampant onomatopoeia. With this much style oozing from the game, it saddens me to find it wrapped around something so average.

There are many things, besides the look, one can appreciate in *XIII*. The narrative itself—fusing elements of the Kennedy assassination, pseudo-Freemasons, and the amnesiac-assassin formula—is actually interesting. While there are still quite a few traditional cutscenes, the use of first-person flashbacks (complete with hurried whispers) creates a better feeling of immersion.

The three-panel replay of your latest head shots, being able to shoot while moving a body, and the tendency to use human shields (perhaps an older XIII teaches Sam Fisher that trick) all help make XIII feel like a super-agent. And the compelling narrative, arresting visuals, and the "my golly, I really am badass" protagonist make for great hooks. But those expecting great innovation or gameplay in the FPS formula might be disappointed.

For all of the glossy veneer *XIII* sports, it's covering a straightforward shooter. There's quite a bit of run 'n' gun, along with the occasional stealth level. In fact, not only are you captured and rendered weaponless early on, but you get captured and thrown into prison again. The missions, even when utilizing stealth, all feature variations of "go to point B" and "find/use the key." Oddly enough, there's a Skills menu that lists such things as "dual weapon" and "silent walk," yet these are things that are assigned to you, not things you develop yourself.

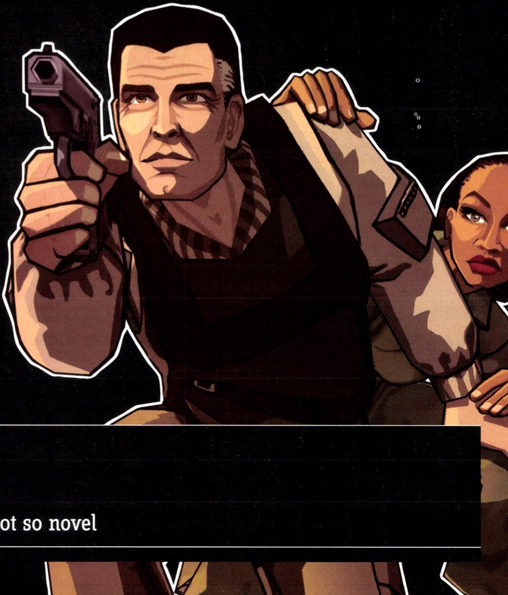
Although the enemies are smart in realistic ways (calling for backup, actually looting weapons and ammo off of corpses), they're also smart in artificial ways. One wonders if they are using the same mythical magic bullet that Lee Harvey Oswald used, since they can snag you quite accurately with even a shotgun. If you're not some sort of FPS *bon vivant* who can naturally pop off head shots with aplomb, then you might find yourself a tad frustrated at these soldiers. The multiplayer mode is passable; the PS2's exclusive Power Up mode is puzzling at first—until you realize that it only really randomizes the weapon spawns and adds some, well, power-ups to the mix. It's not bad, but it's a little underwhelming.

As fantastic as the production values are in this game, David Duchovny's contribution is lacking. His extraordinary dearth of vocal tonality and invective ranges from passable to ridiculous. While Eve is merely passable, we salute Adam West's performance as the gruff authority figure who you inevitably follow.

Sadly, *XIII's* gameplay is too pedestrian; strip away the gorgeous visage and you have a typical shooter with some good tweaks. Perhaps things will improve when the inevitable *XIV* (or *XIII-II*?) comes along.

**Thierry Nguyen**

★★★½



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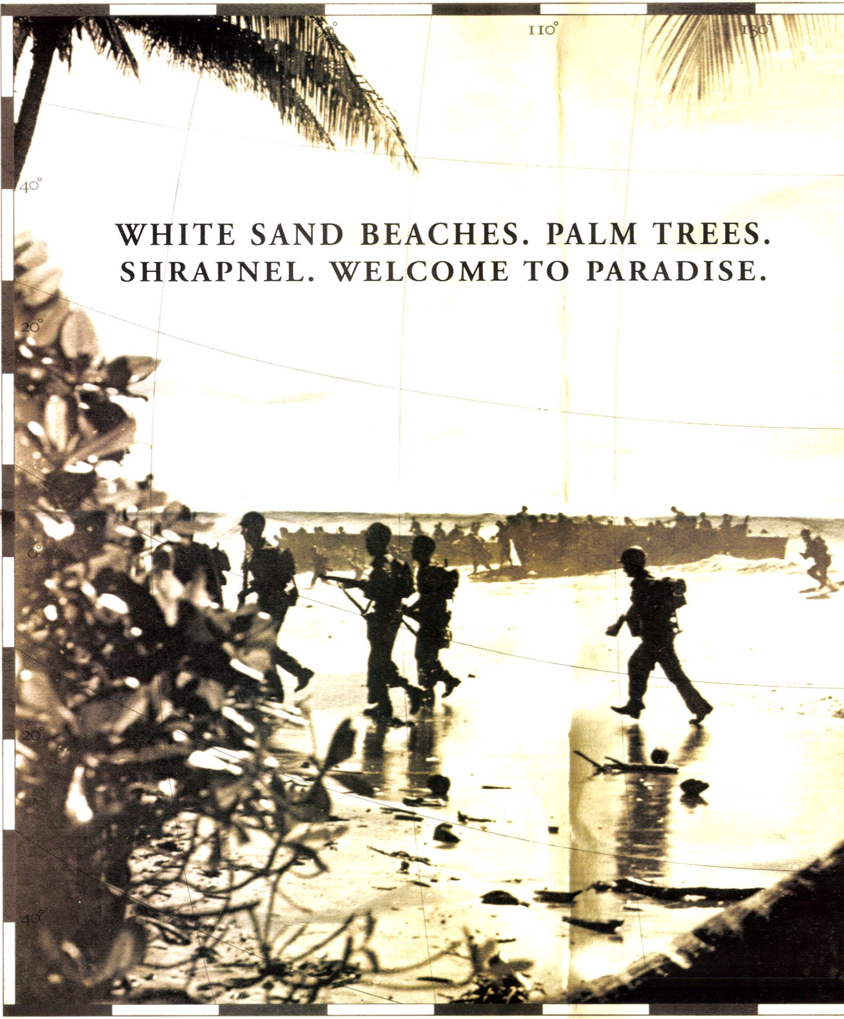
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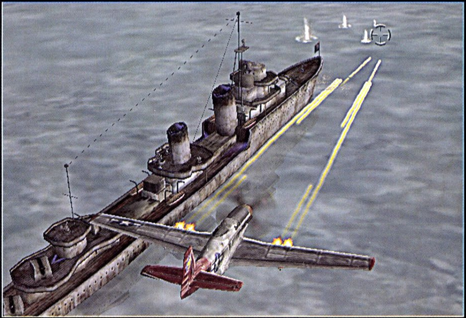
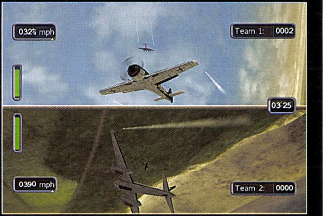


# SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

## All action, all the time

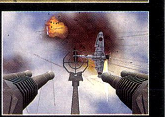
**Publisher:** LucasArts
**Developer:** Totally Games
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

*SWON* is not a flight sim. It's not really a flight-combat game in the same vein as *Ace Combat* either. It's a simple third-person shooter that has you flying a wide variety of missions in a broad selection of historically accurate aircraft. You just point your plane in the direction you want to go and shoot...and that's all you need to worry about. Sometimes you're shooting, and sometimes you're bombing, but mostly it's chasing bad guys and blowing them out of the sky. If the pace isn't right, you can even speed up time to make chasing Jerry quicker, or slow things down so you can hold him in your sights more easily. You don't even have to "earn" this like some lame "bullet-time" feature...it's always available, and always welcome.



The varied missions have you nailing the Bosch on escort duty, blowing up his ships, chasing down his bomber squadrons, blowing up buildings and generally causing mayhem. You'll pass yourself off as a sausage-scoffer as you sneak into Nazi airspace in one of their own planes, and you'll gradually acquire a squadron of 20 aircraft, including some experimental goodies. All of them are satisfying to fly, and there's an upgrade system that provides the necessary sensation of progress through the 30 campaign tasks. The emphasis is on capturing the adrenaline of dogfighting and air-to-ground combat, and the variety of tactics keeps the boredom at bay. Some of the missions are way too tough, but there's plenty of eye candy to keep you happy while you work out how to hunt the Hun successfully.

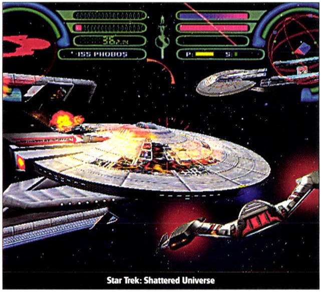
Special note must go to the presentation: The graphics are great throughout—but it's the music that's a real wowzer. Composed by Michael Giacchino and performed by the Northwest Sinfonia, the soundtrack evokes the period perfectly.



Extra fun points also go to the two-player mode. While an online mode would have been appreciated, in splitscreen you can choose dogfighting or an interesting "competitive" co-op mode where you can replay the campaign with a pal. It's fun stuff, and it acts as a pleasant bonus once you've beaten the meat of the game.

**John Davison**

★★★★



Star Trek: Shattered Universe

# STAR TREK: SHATTERED UNIVERSE

**Publisher:** TDK Mediactive
**Developer:** Starsphere
**MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Space. The final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship *Excelsior*. Its mission: to finally give us a *Star Trek* game that doesn't totally suck.

*Shattered Universe* goes the extra mile to get us out of the squeaky-clean *Star Trek* story lines by dropping the player into an alternate reality where the Federation doesn't exist (though, surprisingly, all the same characters and vessels do) and Federation shuttle craft have been transformed into fighters. OK. So far, so good. I can dig a good *Colony Wars*–type space-combat sim.

As a fighter pilot on Capt. Sulu's *Excelsior*, you'll face off against the regular cast of Klingons and Romulans, as well as a few other alien baddies, and yes, even the alternate *Enterprise*. In other words, this alternate universe is pretty half-assed, though Trekkies (is that the proper term?) will be stoked to see decent renditions of their favorite *Trek* ships trading phaser fire on the screen.

But venturing out of the shuttle bay and into deep-space dogfights offers up pretty lukewarm action. First and foremost: Phasers just aren't exciting weapons for a game like this. They might look cool on television, but when I'm dueling with enemy craft, I want something a bit more satisfying to fire up his tailpipe. To be fair, each ship has a button for photon torpedoes and a more conventional secondary phaser weapon, but it still just doesn't feel meaty enough to me.

And what's with each craft being stuck in gear? You can't come to a dead stop in this game. You're either going forward, a bit faster forward, or backward. There's no way to set your speed, which means there's no way to match velocity with a target, which is just stupid. What I'm trying to say here is that the controls are broken. I want a larger selection of weapons and better control over my speed before I take on these alternate-reality goons.

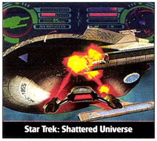
In short, *Shattered Universe* just doesn't deliver. The onscreen action never heats up enough to be considered exciting, and even if it did, the shoddy control scheme would keep it from being any fun anyway. Additionally, tracking more than one target is more than the HUD can handle, and it's full of gauges that aren't clearly labeled, leading to more than a few "huh?" moments during the heat of battle.

Mission: Failed.

**Greg Sewart**

★★

Star Trek: Shattered Universe



Star Trek: Shattered Universe

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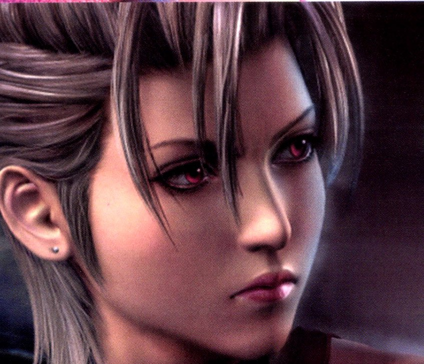

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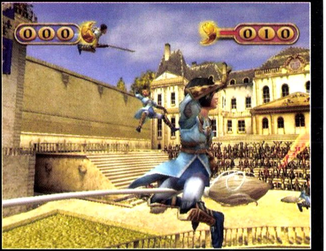
**LATIN LOVE**
The Hogwarts motto, *"Draco dormiens nunquam titillandus"* means "never tickle a sleeping dragon."



# HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP

## Not quite sports, not quite anything else

**Publisher:** EA Games
**Developer:** Electronic Arts U.K.
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

In building a game around Harry Potter's favorite sport, EA has made some fairly interesting choices. Instead of throwing you face first into a very fast-paced, often confusing, and frankly, bizarre sport, you're forced to complete a set of simple training challenges before you even get into your first match. As you learn the basics of the game, you'll have opportunities to challenge the other houses of Hogwarts. Beat them all and you can represent the country of your choice against the rest of the world.

This is good in that it gives younger players something of a kiddie pool in which to build up their skills before jumping into the "real" game. But for anyone who's ever played a soccer or basketball game (Quidditch is in some ways a blend of the two, only played, you know, on broomsticks), these first challenges will be almost pitifully simple. I had exactly one goal scored against me in the entire Hogwarts section, and I'm not remotely a sports guy.

The flip side is that once you move into the World Cup, the matches seem insanely difficult by comparison. You'll need to use every technique you've been taught in order to succeed.

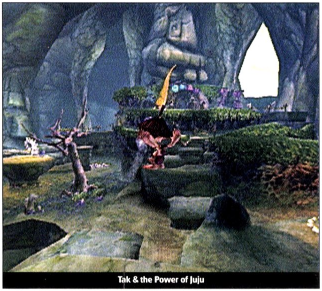
And that's harder than it sounds, considering you're playing in a 3D environment with no real control over speed or altitude; the game controls these for you in a way that's sometimes utterly incomprehensible. Oh, and forget about being able to pick your player; the game shifts control to key positions on its own schedule. If you're chasing the guy with the Quaffle and he gets away from you, you can't switch to a closer player. You can't even speed burst.

On top of that, teams can score via unblockable special moves presented via unskippable cinemas, further diminishing any feeling of control. In other words, if you're expecting something approximating a real sports game, you'll be somewhat disappointed.

On the other hand, if you're expecting more of a story, you'll also be disappointed. So in the end, *Quidditch World Cup* falls into pure novelty territory: It's fun for a few hours or as a nice diversion for two-player matches. Hardcore *Harry* fans will want it for their collections; the rest of us will marvel at the fact that it really is just like the books...and then go play something else.

**Joe Rybicki**

★★★


Tak & the Power of Juju

# TAK & THE POWER OF JUJU

**Publisher:** THQ
**Developer:** Avalanche
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

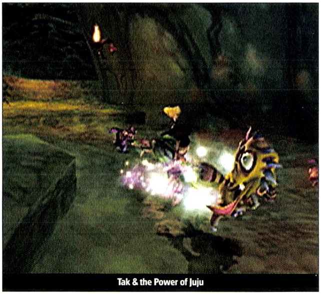
Like so many efforts to make a new franchise "for the kids," *Tak* suffers from sometimes trying a little too hard. Whereas THQ's work with Nickelodeon on the new *SpongeBob* game is a great case study in how to get it right, *Tak* proves the partnership can come unstuck too.

Neither the story nor the structure is going to win any awards for originality. There are some mildly amusing gags involving sheep, but the game centers on collecting stuff. Lots of stuff. I guess it's what you'd expect from this kind of game. Collect a bunch of one kind of thing to activate a quest, then collect a bunch of other stuff to make something else happen, and while you're collecting that stuff, collect magical stuff too...oh, and while you're at it, collect a bunch of other stuff too for good measure. We've seen it in *Jak*, in *Crash*, and every other game in the genre, and when it's not compensated for with other elements, it just doesn't work. There's nothing particularly original here, so the whole thing is riding on its charm—and its fun factor...of which *Tak* has very little.

After a few hours, the boredom sets in, and the number of reasons you have for wanting to beat the damn thing is less than one. It's just not fun enough. Sure, it has its moments, but the game isn't always consistent with its mission. It's cute and desperately trying to be hip, but on the other hand, it's occasionally excruciatingly difficult. Its intended audience will no doubt get frustrated. I know I did.

**John Davison**

★★★½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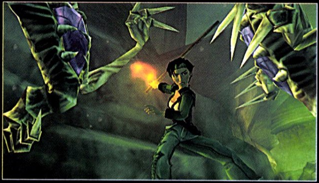
Oh SNAP!

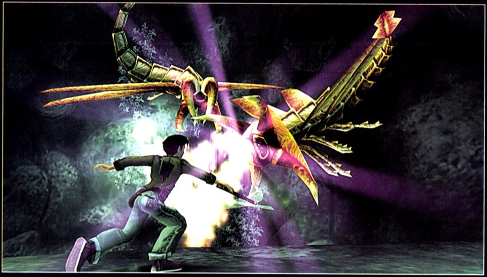
**PICTURE THIS**
Be sure to snap photos of your companions, since they qualify as different species.

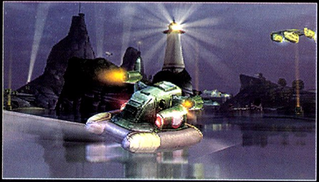
# BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

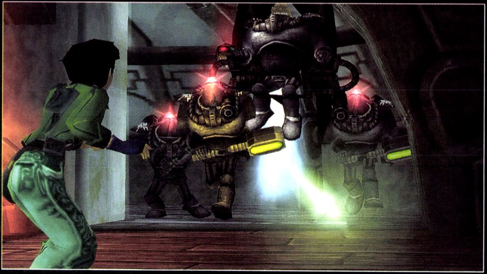
Beyond good gameplay, with some really evil glitches

**Publisher:** Ubisoft **Developer:** Ubisoft **MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen









Playing *Beyond Good & Evil* is like being on vacation: The game is suffused with a joy of discovery that's similar to the sensation you get when visiting a new place and experiencing new things. French developer Michel Ancel (he's *le homme* behind *Rayman*) has created a rich world that pushes far beyond the boundaries of his game, lending a depth and weight to everything that happens. Despite the whimsical nature of the varied critters that inhabit Hyllis, everyone (and every*thing*) feels so real that you might just forget you're playing a game.

It's a thrilling achievement—and it's reason enough to try this title. *BG&E* has an awesome vitality stemming from the abundance of life that spills out of every corner of its world. From the tiniest detail to the largest creature, *BG&E* overflows with energy.

Plus, *BG&E* has the gameplay to back up all this highfalutin mumbo jumbo. (Well, mostly—there are a few serious issues, but we'll get to that in a bit.) An adventure in the classic mold, *BG&E* is full of labyrinthine puzzles, sprawling exploration, quick action, fun (but not too challenging) racing, a smattering of combat, lots of sneaking around, and some keen cooperative bits with your cohorts.

The game's neatest part, though, is the photography—especially the way it's integrated into all aspects of the experience. You play as Jade, an action reporter who gets caught up in an underground attempt to reveal the truth behind alien attacks, rampant abductions, and the corrupt Alpha Section, a military unit that's supposed to be protecting the Hyllians. In order to do so, you'll have to uncover evidence of foul play, photograph it, and submit it to the rebel newspaper. Meanwhile, you've also been commissioned to snap photos of every living creature as a project for a scientist who wants to document every species before they're possibly destroyed. With these two elements in mind, snapping pics becomes a great gimmick for moving the story along, as well as an involving side quest and, most of all, a terrific way to connect with the world around you.

Unfortunately, you'll be rudely pulled out of this otherwise immersive experience, courtesy of a few nasty glitches. The worst offender: the framerate. Although it never renders the game unplayable, the framerate often chunks up enough to make it extremely unpleasant to do what you need to do most—explore your environment. Just panning the game camera around a small enclosed area can sometimes be an eye-gouging chore. It's especially hard to take since *BG&E* doesn't seem to be doing anything PS2 can't handle.

The control could also use some refinement. Button placement is somewhat awkward (I can't count the number of times I readied my camera instead of running from something), and the combat isn't responsive enough.

While these problems are significant enough to mar what should have been a brilliant release, *BG&E*'s fundamental gameplay is so appealing that I recommend you look past the flaws to enjoy the overall experience. Just be sure to sit through the end credits for a hint of a sequel to come. And let's hope they iron out the glitches so that the next game can be everything it's supposed to be.

**Gary Steinman**

★★★★

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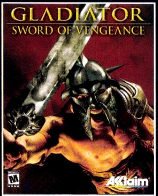

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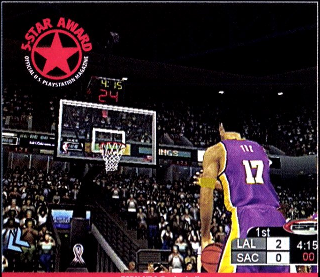
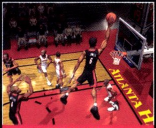
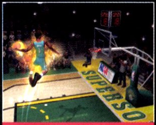
**THE ANSWER**
Allen Iverson, *ESPN NBA*'s cover athlete, played serious football in high school. As quarterback, he led his team to a state championship.



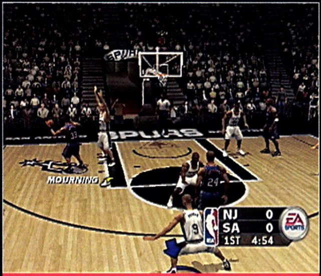
ESPN NBA Basketball



NBA Jam 2004



NBA Jam 2004



NBA Live 2004

## ESPN NBA BASKETBALL

**Publisher:** Sega Sports
**Developer:** Visual Concepts
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

It's scary just how good Visual Concepts is becoming with this whole professional basketball thing. The company's latest game, *ESPN NBA Basketball*, represents the pinnacle of the sport in videogame form with its nearly flawless gameplay and wide assortment of modes.

It includes an online option that shares many of the features found in its NFL counterpart, like online leagues. But perhaps one of the most entertaining aspects of this year's game is the 24/7 mode.

It's a little different from the standard modes in other basketball games because it doesn't focus on a specific team. Or even the NBA for that matter. Instead, you have to build up a name for a custom player by training and participating in different street-ball-style events across the country, which range from basic 1-on-1 matchups to games with special stipulations that must be fulfilled in order to progress. Beating some players lets you call on them down the road when you need a partner for a 2-on-2 game. 24/7 almost feels like a basketball RPG, and it never fails to suck you in for a few good hours, despite your best efforts to play just one quick game.

The good ol' 5-on-5 action isn't exactly a slouch, either. Everything—including the post-up game, jump shots, dribbling moves, and rebounding—has been executed almost perfectly.

However, there are some lingering issues with passing and the fast break: While the overall game has been sped up ever so slightly, it's still pretty hard to execute a clean fast break, for example, partly because players tend not to run far enough ahead of the pack and also because the passing just isn't as crisp and responsive as it should be. There are still a few instances, though, that allow you to run to the basket uncontested for a monstrous dunk.

Like in previous games in the series, the commentary is still top-notch, as are the graphics, which have received a small upgrade in the form of flowing jerseys (finally!) and new player animation that helps give the game a much more natural look.

There's just so much to like about *ESPN NBA Basketball* that any basketball fan—casual or hardcore—would be deemed insane for even considering passing it up.

**Giancarlo Varanini**

★★★★★

ESPN NBA Basketball

ESPN NBA Basketball

## NBA JAM 2004

**Publisher:** Acclaim
**Developer:** Acclaim
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Undoubtedly sparked by the popularity of Electronic Arts' *NBA Street*, Acclaim decided to resurrect *NBA Jam*. But after spending some time with the latest incarnation, it's become clear to me that the series should've stayed dead and buried. The problem isn't the basic gameplay mechanics, which really haven't changed that much since the original *NBA Jam*, but rather some of the new features that magnify some of *NBA Jam*'s inherent faults.

The main culprit is the hot-spot feature. After charging the jam meter by performing a variety of dunks and moves, you can execute a hot-spot dunk that initially gives three points automatically but increases by one point each time the jam meter is charged. This feature works well as incentive for being fancier with the ball, but it's even more effective as a cheap tool for incredibly abusive rubberband A.I.

The computer is absolutely relentless when you have the lead. It'll steal the ball the second you throw it inbounds or moments after moving the ball up the court. Either way, this usually means the computer's jam meter will charge rather quickly in the process, resulting in a hot-spot dunk and the subsequent evaporation of the lead in a matter of seconds.

It just isn't fun. And since most of the cool extras can be accessed only in the single-player modes, you'll have to deal with it. Of course, you could always buy NBA Street Vol. 2 instead.

**Giancarlo Varanini**

★★½

## NBA LIVE 2004

**Publisher:** EA Sports
**Developer:** EA Sports
**MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Any basketball coach will tell a team that it can't win a championship without good defense. Taking this lesson into consideration, EA Sports has significantly beefed up the defense in *NBA Live 2004*, turning it into a much more accurate representation of professional basketball than its fast-paced predecessor. No longer can the ball be passed carelessly around the perimeter, since defenders are much smarter about jumping into passing lanes to knock the ball away or even to steal it. In fact, passing the ball into the post usually results in a double team that occasionally forces you to make a bad pass.

Even the perimeter defense has been improved. It's much more difficult to burn a defender using the game's excellent freestyle controls, which enable you to perform a variety of spectacular ball-handling maneuvers simply by moving the right analog stick. Defenders are also noticeably more adept at performing switches on picks, making it harder to run to the basket for a layup or a dunk.

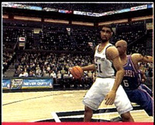
There are plenty of other enhancements that make *NBA Live 2004* one of the best games in the series. The two different shot types—one for layups and dunks and the other for outside shots—add a new dimension to the game, since they can be used strategically, depending on the defensive situation. The layup or dunk shot makes it easier to draw fouls when you're inside the paint, while the regular jump shot can be used as a safety in case you're not close enough to the basket or it looks like you might get an offensive charge call.

Just about every facet of *NBA Live 2004* has been refined, including the game's different modes. The Dynasty mode is more robust, with player-training options and additional information that helps you make better decisions on player transactions. In addition, online play now features tournaments that can support up to 64 teams and official EA Sports tournaments.

What ultimately makes this game stand out? The gameplay has been dramatically tweaked, but the changes haven't detracted from the quick and responsive pace of the previous game. If you want a healthy mix of simulation and arcade elements, then you really can't go wrong with *NBA Live 2004*.

**Giancarlo Varanini**

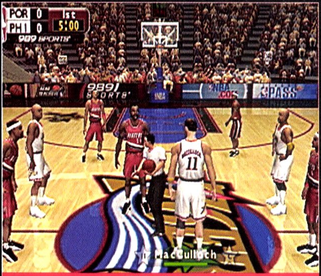
★★★★½



NBA Live 2004

NBA Live 2004

**2107** points were scored by *NBA Live 2004* cover star Vince Carter in the '99-'00 season.


NBA ShootOut 2004

## NBA SHOOTOUT 2004

**Publisher:** Sony CEA
**Developer:** 989 Sports
**MSRP:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

It's too bad the *ShootOut* series has always taken a backseat to other basketball games, considering that it has often introduced features eventually stolen by other development teams. But because those innovative features were often poorly executed, very few people actually cared. Fortunately, *NBA ShootOut 2004* has been subject to much refinement, and while it still can't compete with the competition, 989 Sports has created a surprisingly solid all-around basketball game.

*ShootOut 2004* still has some of the signature problems that have plagued the series for a while. On the lower difficulty settings, defenders too often back down from the ball handler, making it easy to walk the ball right through the paint for a short jumper or layup. Shot percentages are also a little off, so in some cases, it's easier to hit a three-pointer as opposed to a 5-foot jumper.

But, in general, the game's defense has been substantially improved. Careless passes—especially wild jump passes—often result in turnovers, and if the ball handler isn't careful, the ball can easily be stripped away. Likewise, attempting a halfhearted shot with a defender's giant mitt in your face usually means the ball will rattle off the rim. These are things any self-respecting basketball game should have, but they still serve as proof of how much *ShootOut 2004* has improved.

Another bright spot is the game's online play. Like *NFL GameDay 2004*, *ShootOut 2004* offers a full-featured online mode complete with message boards, e-mail, tournaments, and special team affiliations that almost act as leagues. The fact that it's all contained within the *ShootOut* environment and not on a website is quite impressive, and it works quite well. The Franchise (aka Career) mode is also worth mentioning, simply because of its unique approach: You essentially guide a player on a path to build a professional career, which includes the summer league and the basketball equivalent of the minor leagues.

There's no question that you should go with *ESPN Basketball* or *Live* when making the decision to buy a basketball game this year, but if for some crazy reason *ShootOut 2004* is the only game you're able to purchase, it certainly wouldn't be a total loss.

**Giancarlo Varanini**

★★★

NBA ShootOut 2004

NBA ShootOut 2004

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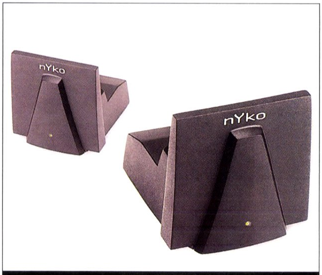
**MOMMY, WHAT'S A TFT?**
Thin film transistor is a type of LCD screen on which each pixel is controlled by separate transistors. It's the best kind of LCD available.

7.0 TFT Universal GameScreen

7.0 TFT Universal GameScreen



Wireless Net Extender

## 7.0 TFT UNIVERSAL GAMESCREEN

**Manufacturer:** MadCatz
**MSRP:** $199.99

I lost count of the number of times some variant of the following comment occurred while I was testing the GameScreen:

"Oh Lord, not another—*holy crap*, that looks awesome!"

Seems like everyone wandering through my cube had to stop and stare at this ungainly device perched atop my PS2. And just about everyone was amazed by how crisp the screen is, how vibrant the colors are, and how easily the image can be seen from sharp angles.

For 200 bucks, it certainly *ought* to be turning heads. Unfortunately, a few other things I'd expect to go along with that $200 price tag seem to be missing.

For example, I can't argue with the 16:9 widescreen aspect ratio; with more and more games supporting widescreen, that's a welcome feature. However, the lack of a proper 4:3 mode for games that *don't* support widescreen is, in my opinion, an almost unforgivable omission. Even great-looking games look silly when all the characters appear bloated.

Furthermore, with some games, the image seemed either washed-out or oversaturated, with no in-between. This wouldn't be as much of a problem if the screen had controls beyond Brightness and Color.

Still, it's an otherwise well-designed product, and while 200 bucks is a lot of cash, it's only $50 more than the GameScreen's vastly inferior competitors. If you're in the market for such a screen, you could do much worse. ●

**Joe Rybicki**

★★★★½

## WIRELESS NET EXTENDER

**Manufacturer:** Nyko
**MSRP:** $99.99

What a great idea: Turn a proprietary wireless format into a compact, stylish form factor. Make it so plug-and-play simple that your grandmother could figure out how to use it. Then sell it in a matched pair for an extremely reasonable price. That's the Wireless Net Extender in a nutshell.

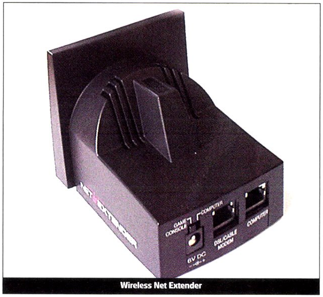
You want easy? Unplug your broadband cable from the back of your PC and plug it into the WNE's base unit. Run another cable (included) from the base unit back to your computer. Take the remote unit over to your PS2 and connect it to your Network Adaptor with another cable (also included). Turn everything on and *presto!*—you can take your PS2 as far as 100 feet from your broadband connection and maintain a solid connection to the Internet. And when you want to go online with your PC again, just flip the switch on the base unit to Computer and you're there.

It has a few drawbacks compared to setting up a legitimate wireless home network. You won't be able to go online with your PC and your PS2 at the same time, for example. You won't get quite the same range or quite the same transfer speeds, either. And it's not as cheap to expand: You'd need to buy a pair each time.

But brother, for 100 bucks, it's the cheapest wireless solution you'll find anywhere. I figured it was too good to be true...but then I fired up *SOCOM* and suffered practically no lag beyond a few initial stutters. It'll never be as fast as a wired connection—and the 1.5Mbps transfer speed is barely a tenth of the speed of Wi-Fi—but for $100, it's fast enough.

**Joe Rybicki**

★★★★½



Wireless Net Extender

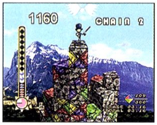
## PS1 Quick Hits

### FORD TRUCK MANIA

**Publisher:** Gotham Games
**Developer:** Alpine Studios, Inc.
**MSRP:** $9.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

It was a rare opportunity for me to drive the finest Ford pickup 1932 had to offer. It wasn't much of an experience, and *FTM* ain't that much of a game. Pedestrian at best, *FTM*, even with a track editor, doesn't truck very far. **–T.N.**

★★



### TALL: INFINITY

**Publisher:** Agetec
**Developer:** Hamster
**MSRP:** $9.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Didn't we learn from those wacky folks in Babel that building a tower to infinity isn't such a hot idea? With God himself frowning on the notion, Hamster should have realized that its bizarrely bad puzzler was cursed from the start. **–G.S.**

★½

## PS2 Hardware

### CHAMELEON WIRELESS

**Manufacturer:** Pelican
**MSRP:** $34.99

It's a bargain-priced wireless pad with a fairly solid feel and a pretty nifty gimmick: It's packaged with a tiny R/C car like the ones that were all the rage last holiday season. Unfortunately, the buttons and sticks are so sensitive that it's hard to play with much precision. **–J.R.**

★★★

### EXTREME ACTION

**Manufacturer:** Logitech
**MSRP:** $24.99

Something about this leather-trimmed controller feels remarkably comfortable. Unfortunately, the analog sticks appear to have an insanely tiny neutral zone, so you'll need to lower the stick sensitivity in games that support it. Too bad so many games don't. **–J.R.**

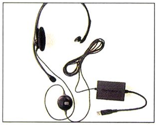
★★★

### SOUL CALIBUR II UNIVERSAL ARCADE STICK

**Manufacturer:** Nuby
**MSRP:** $39.99

If you take your fighting games seriously, there are cheaper, sturdier, and less-ugly arcade sticks available, but there aren't many that work with every system. This one at least is kinda clever. **–J.D.**

★★½

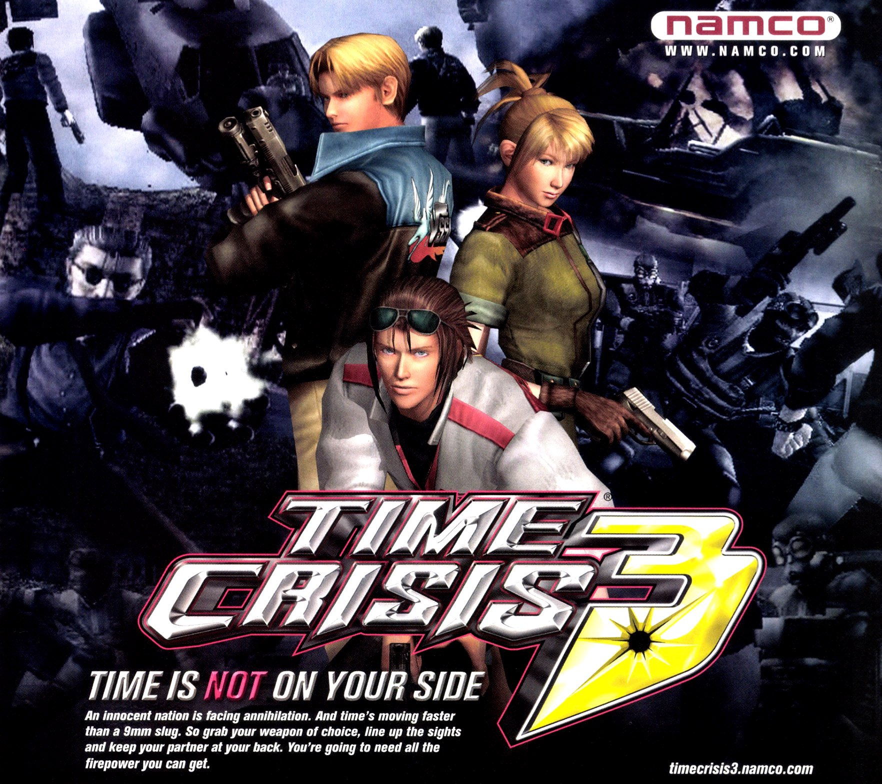


### USB HEADSET

**Manufacturer:** Sony CEA
**MSRP:** $29.99

The extra-large earpiece makes this headset comfortable as all get out, and the volume control is an absolute godsend. My only complaint is the Mute button: Its location makes it way too easy to hit accidentally. Otherwise, trade on up; you'll be glad you did. **–J.R.**

★★★★



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***3 modes of play to keep the bullets flying long after the story's done.***

MACHINE GUN
79

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Violence

GUNCON 2

PlayStation.2

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★ ★ ★ ★

# MISSION DIRECTIVE

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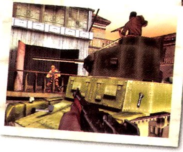
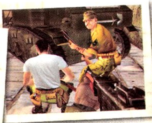
Philippines, 1942

---

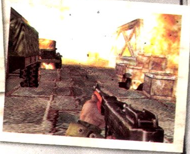
The next stop on your tour takes you deep into the lush jungles on the Philippine island of Luzon. Your job: Hold the last bridge against the advancing Japanese. And if you can't hold it, make sure no one else can. Partner with a demolition unit, set the charges, and get out alive. The only one to pay a toll on this bridge will be the Japanese.



Provide covering fire for a crippled tank through city streets.



Work closely with other Allied units in the fight for the bridge.



When bullets don't work, bring in the high explosive.

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RISING SUN

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EA GAMES

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# REPLAY

We make you rock at your games.

## 188

## JAK II

**Let slip your naughty dogs of war**

We know this game is hard, so we had Naughty Dog tell us exactly what you need to do to get past the 10 hardest spots in the game.

## INSIDE REPLAY

### 190 Soul Calibur II

We asked, and you told us! Beating out the likes of Mitsurugi and Nightmare, Voldo was the most requested character, so here he is.

### 192 SSX 3

We got help from Prima in showing you all the coolest tricks, how to pull them off, and where the heck stuff is on the mountain.

### PS2 Games

194 Castlevania: Lament of Innocence
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198 Rewind

## PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in green indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a five-star score. A number ❶ indicates its rank in the top-selling games for each system.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| .hack//INFECTION | Bandai | ★★★½ | 65 |
| .hack//MUTATION | Bandai | ★★★★ | 69 |
| ⑪ .hack//OUTBREAK | Bandai | ★★★★ | 73 |
| 18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker | Acclaim | ★★★★ | 52 |
| 4x4 EVO | GOD Games | ★★★★ | 44 |
| 2002 FIFA World Cup | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 58 |
| Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies | Namco | ★★★★½ | 51 |
| Activision Anthology | Activision | ★★★★ | 64 |
| Aero Elite: Combat Academy | Sega | ★★★ | 67 |
| The Adventures of Cookie & Cream | Agetec | ★★★½ | 44 |
| Aggressive Inline | Acclaim | ★★★★½ | 59 |
| Airblade | Namco | ★★★★ | 53 |
| Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction | EA Games | ★★★½ | 72 |
| All-Star Baseball 2002 | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 44 |
| All-Star Baseball 2003 | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 56 |
| All-Star Baseball 2004 | Acclaim | ★★★ | 67 |
| Alter Echo | THQ | ★★ | 73 |
| Amplitude | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 68 |
| Antz Extreme Racing | Empire | ★½ | 61 |
| Ape Escape 2 | Ubisoft | ★★★★½ | 70 |
| Aqua Aqua | 3DO | ★★ | 42 |
| Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 70 |
| Arctic Thunder | Midway | ★ | 50 |
| Armored Core 2 | Agetec | ★★★ | 39 |
| Armored Core 2: Another Age | Agetec | ★★★½ | 48 |
| Armored Core 3 | Agetec | ★★★½ | 61 |
| Army Men: Air Attack | 3DO | ★★★½ | 44 |
| Army Men: Green Rogue | 3DO | ★★ | 45 |
| Army Men RTS | 3DO | ★★★★ | 56 |
| Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2 | 3DO | ★★½ | 45 |
| ATV Offroad Fury | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 42 |
| ATV Offroad Fury 2 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 64 |
| ATV Quad Power Racing 2 | Acclaim | ★★★★ | 66 |
| Auto Modellista | Capcom | ★★½ | 69 |
| Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance | Interplay | ★★★★½ | 52 |
| Barbarian | Titus | ★★ | 57 |
| Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament | THQ | ★½ | 51 |
| Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu | Ubisoft | ★★ | 74 |
| Batman: Vengeance | Ubisoft | ★★★ | 51 |
| Battle Engine Aquila | Atari | ★★★½ | 65 |
| Big Mutha Truckers | Empire | ★★★ | 71 |
| Black & Bruised | Majesco | ★★★★ | 67 |
| Blade II | Activision | ★★ | 62 |
| Blood Omen 2 | Eidos | ★★★½ | 57 |
| BloodRayne | Majesco | ★★★½ | 63 |
| Bloody Roar 3 | Activision | ★★★½ | 47 |
| BMX XXX | Acclaim | ★½ | 65 |
| Bombastic | Capcom | ★★½ | 72 |
| Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter | Capcom | ★★★★ | 67 |
| Britney's Dance Beat | THQ | ★★★★ | 58 |
| The Bouncer | Square EA | ★★★ | 42 |
| Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds | Sierra/Fox | ★★★ | 73 |

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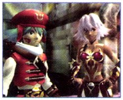
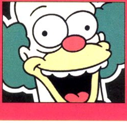
If you haven't, then you might have missed a secret keyword code. Here it is, just for you: Abrasive False Tragedy



**194**
**WHIP!**
**Castlevania**
Three more whips for you!



**196**
**HIT/RUN!**
**Simpsons Hit & Run**
Where the gags at? Here!

**198**
**REWIND!**
**Back to December 1998**
Best and worst in 12/98

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Burnout | Acclaim | ★★★★½ | 52 |
| Burnout 2: Point of Impact | Acclaim | ★★★★ | 63 |
| Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom! | Crave | ★★ | 73 |
| Cabela's Big Game Hunter | Activision | ★★½ | 67 |
| ⑯ **Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season** | **Activision** | ★★½ | **74** |

**WHY, WHY, WHY?** Why did you buy this game? Our only tip is to not even play it in the first place. And to think that more copies of this game were sold than *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution.* For shame.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capcom vs. SNK 2 | Capcom | ★★★★½ | 51 |
| CART Fury | Midway | ★ | 47 |
| Casper: Spirit Dimensions | TDK Mediactive | ★★½ | 50 |
| Castlevania: Lament of Innocence | Konami | ★★★★ | 74 |
| Chaos Legion | Capcom | ★★★½ | 70 |
| Chessmaster | Ubisoft | ★★★½ | 70 |
| Choplifter: Crisis Shield | Xicat | ★★★ | 69 |
| City Crisis | Take 2 | ★★★ | 48 |
| Clock Tower 3 | Capcom | ★★★ | 68 |
| **Colin McRae Rally 3** | **Codemasters** | ★★★★★ | **68** |
| Commandos 2: Men of Courage | Eidos | ★★ | 62 |
| Conflict: Desert Storm | Gotham Games | ★½ | 63 |
| Conflict: Desert Storm II | Gotham Games | ★★★ | 74 |
| Conflict Zone | Ubisoft | ★★½ | 63 |
| Contra: Shattered Soldier | Konami | ★★★★½ | 64 |
| Cool Boarders 2001 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 46 |
| **Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex** | **Universal** | ★★★½ | **51** |
| **Crazy Taxi** | **Acclaim** | ★★★★ | **46** |
| Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon | Ubisoft | ★★ | 74 |
| Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse | Metro3D | ★½ | 49 |
| **Dark Cloud** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★½ | **46** |
| **Dark Cloud 2** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **66** |
| Dark Summit | THQ | ★★★½ | 52 |
| **Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2** | **Acclaim** | ★★★½ | **50** |
| DDRMAX | Konami | ★★★★ | 63 |
| ⑮ **DDRMAX 2** | **Konami** | ★★★★ | **74** |

Like dancing in real life, all we can say is **practice, practice, practice**. That training mode is there for a reason.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore | Tecmo | ★★★★½ | 39 |
| Dead to Rights | Namco | ★★★ | 65 |
| Def Jam: Vendetta | EA Sports Big | ★★★★ | 67 |
| Defender | Midway | ★★★½ | 62 |
| Deus Ex: The Conspiracy | Eidos | ★★★★½ | 56 |
| **Devil May Cry** | **Capcom** | ★★★★★ | **50** |
| Devil May Cry 2 | Capcom | ★★★ | 66 |
| Dino Stalker | Capcom | ★★★½ | 61 |
| Disaster Report | Agetec | ★★★½ | 65 |
| ⑥ **Disgaea: Hour of Darkness** | **Atlus** | ★★★★ | **72** |

**WANT AN EASY WAY TO LEVEL UP?**

Go to the Cave of Trials, stage 3—lots of good XP, and since all the enemies are on a 3x3 grid, any 3x3 attack will kill them quickly.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Disney Golf | EA Games | ★★★★ | 61 |
| Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure | Activision | ★★★★ | 73 |
| Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows | Ubisoft | ★★½ | 63 |
| Disney's Treasure Planet | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 64 |
| Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers | Ubisoft | ★★★½ | 42 |
| Downforce | Titus | ★★ | 57 |
| Downhill Domination | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 71 |
| Dr. Muto | Midway | ★★½ | 63 |
| Dragon Ball Z: Budokai | Atari | ★★★½ | 65 |
| Dragon Rage | 3DO | ★½ | 54 |
| Drakan: The Ancients' Gates | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 53 |
| Driven | Bam | ★ | 52 |
| Driving Emotion Type-S | Square EA | ★★½ | 41 |
| Drome Racers | EA Games | ★★½ | 64 |
| Dropship | Bam | ★★★★ | 57 |
| Dual Hearts | Atlus | ★★★ | 61 |
| Dynasty Tactics | Koei | ★★★★½ | 61 |
| Dynasty Tactics 2 | Koei | ★★★★ | 74 |
| Dynasty Warriors 2 | Koei | ★★★★ | 38 |
| Dynasty Warriors 3 | Koei | ★★★★ | 52 |
| Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends | Koei | ★★★½ | 65 |
| Dynasty Warriors 4 | Koei | ★★★★½ | 68 |
| Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future | Acclaim | ★★½ | 56 |
| Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness | Kemco | ★★½ | 61 |
| eJay Clubworld | Crave | ★★ | 73 |
| Endgame | Empire | ★★ | 59 |
| Enter the Matrix | Atari | ★★★ | 71 |
| Ephemeral Fantasia | Konami | ★½ | 49 |
| **Escape From Monkey Island** | **LucasArts** | ★★★★★ | **46** |
| ESPN International Track & Field | Konami | ★★★ | 39 |
| ESPN International Winter Sports 2002 | Konami | ★★★★ | 54 |
| ESPN MLS Extra Time | Konami | ★★ | 44 |
| ESPN National Hockey Night | Konami | ★½ | 45 |
| ESPN NBA 2Night | Konami | ★★ | 42 |
| ESPN NBA 2Night 2002 | Konami | ★★★ | 56 |
| ④ **ESPN NHL Hockey** | **Sega Sports** | ★★★★½ | **73** |

We couldn't find any neat tricks or codes. Maybe you kanuckleheads can send us some tricks or codes by writing to opm@ziffdavis.com.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ⑩ **ESPN NFL Football** | **Sega Sports** | ★★★★½ | **72** |

Want some cool items in your crib? Here's a short list of some unlockable items and how to snag them:

| COMPLETE A... | TO UNLOCK... |
|---|---|
| 30-yard pass play | Team Banner B<br>ESPN NFL Football wall poster |
| 40-yard pass play | Team Pennant A<br>Skies of Arcadia wall poster |
| 60-yard pass play | Team Helmet Mug<br>Extra Create-A-Team Logo |
| 99-yard pass play | Team Player Standee C<br>The Danger Soundtrack |
| Whole game in First-Person Football mode | Paper Football |
| Win the Super Bowl | Air Hockey Table |

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding | Konami | ★★★ | 41 |
| ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002 | Konami | ★★★ | 53 |
| ESPN X Games Skateboarding | Konami | ★★★★ | 49 |
| Eternal Ring | Agetec | ★★ | 38 |
| Eve of Extinction | Eidos | ★★½ | 56 |
| Everblue 2 | Capcom | ★★★ | 66 |
| Evergrace | Agetec | ★★ | 39 |
| EverQuest Online Adventures | Sony Online Ent. | ★★½ | 66 |
| Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick | THQ | ★★★ | 70 |
| Evil Twin | Ubisoft | ★★ | 52 |
| Evolution Skateboarding | Konami | ★★½ | 63 |
| Evolution Snowboarding | Konami | ★ | 65 |
| Extermination | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 48 |
| Extreme-G III | Acclaim | ★★★★ | 50 |
| **F1 2001** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **52** |
| F1 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 60 |
| **F1 Career Challenge** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **71** |
| F1 Championship | Ubisoft | ★★★★ | 43 |
| F1 Championship Season 2000 | EA Sports | ★★½ | 41 |
| Fantavision | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 40 |
| Fatal Frame | Tecmo | ★★★★ | 55 |
| Ferrari F355 Challenge | Sega | ★★ | 61 |
| FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 39 |
| FIFA 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 51 |
| **FIFA Soccer 2003** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **63** |
| Fighter Maker 2 | Agetec | ★½ | 64 |
| ⑭ **Final Fantasy X** | **Square EA** | ★★★★★ | **53** |

**LOCKED CHEST IN AL BED HOME** You usually need to find all of the Al Bed books to translate the chest and figure out the code. You can skip all that by typing in 5633. You get a nifty sphere.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Finding Nemo | THQ | ★★★½ | 71 |
| Fireblade | Midway | ★★½ | 59 |
| Fisherman's Challenge | Konami | ★★ | 67 |
| Forever Kingdom | Agetec | ★½ | 53 |
| Formula One 2001 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 50 |
| Freaky Flyers | Midway | ★★★½ | 72 |

# RATCHET & CLANK 2: GOING COMMANDO

## Homegrown tips straight from Insomniac

*Helpful tips to tide you over till next month, when we'll have a full strategy!*

### PLANET BOLDAN

Spiderbot Launcher

"Fighting on Planet Boldan can be tough. When you are behind indestructible barriers (the ones with the yellow caution tape), the thugs won't fire at you. This will give you the chance to take a breath from the firefight and figure out what you want to do. Hint 1: Thugs hate spiders!"
**–Tyler Moore, tester**

### GLADIATOR ARENAS

Blitz Cannon

"When fighting in the Gladiator Arenas, it's very helpful to fire at enemies with the Blitz Gun. Strafe toward them, then jump into the remaining enemy crowd right at the last moment, finishing them off with your wrench (since the weaker ones were killed off by the shotgun)."
**–Darren Quach, artist**

### HEAVY LANCER

Heavy Lancer

"The Heavy Lancer's long and accurate stopping power proves effective against slow-moving bigger enemies. For instance: You can use it to hold enemies off, then give them a final swat with the wrench."
**–Eric Christensen, senior programmer**

### THE BOUNCER

The Bouncer

"The Bouncer is most effective against groups (since the Bouncer balls expand out in a circle instead of focusing in one direction). However, if the enemies you're fighting happen to track and move with you, you can lead them to a wall—or even better, a corner. Then, instead of firing the Bouncer at the enemies, launch it into the corner. It will do its main damage to the enemies if you've lured them in close enough."
**–Ken Strickland, gameplay programmer**

### STRAFING

"Strafe, dammit! There isn't a more useful strategy in the game than this. Many players overlook this essential strategy and lose precious time in firefights by turning around to face the enemy. Dodge incoming attacks by holding down the L2 or R2 buttons while moving, jump to your left or right to dodge incoming fire, or jump backward over enemies that attack you."
**–Chris Towne, tester**

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Naughty Dog's first game was *Ski Crazed* for the Apple II. Jason Rubin programmed it in a weekend.

# JAK II

## The 10 most difficult moments and how to get past them

*Jak II may very well be one of the most difficult action-platform titles ever released—so, where better to go for expert strategy than to the guys who made it? We asked Naughty Dog to list Jak II's 10 toughest challenges and how to get past them.*

### 1) BLOW UP AMMO AT FORTRESS

The most difficult part of this mission is getting through the first section, where the camera changes to the view of the tank chasing you. It can really throw off your depth perception. First, you need to get used to moving Jak around in this new view. There isn't really any tactic for learning this—just practice.

After that, the best way to make it through this section is to lure the tank into firing a stream of rounds in one spot so that Jak can jump away from it. Stand in one spot, watch for the tank's targeting reticule to lock on, and then roll out of the way and move past whatever obstacle is in front of you. Do this before you try to jump over a pit and get caught midair or land in a stream of rounds, because the tank follows your movement. Repeat this until you reach the next section and always be prepared to jump.

**JAK BLACK**
**Dark Jak kicks some serious ass**
When Jak powers up, his special abilities can get you out of some tough situations.

So whaddya think? Is *Jak II* really that tough? Or is OPM busy smoking the crack again? Send your reader review to opm@ziffdavis.com.

### 4) DESTROY SHIP AT DRILL PLATFORM

Getting through the wave of Flying Krimzon Guards in the first gun turret is the most difficult part of this mission. The most obvious tactic here is to destroy them before they get within firing range of you.

The most common reason for failing this section is spending 10 seconds trying to take out the single enemy that is closest to you. Why waste all that time trying to target one enemy when you have a barrage of five more coming in from the other side? In a lot of cases, that one enemy will fly right in front of your melee of shots while you're firing at the larger incoming group. Pay attention to everything that is going on around you, not just the arrow in the gun turret HUD that detects the closest enemy. If you continuously fire the turret, it will overheat and your fire rate will decrease. Three more things: Strafe, Strafe, and STRAFE!!!

### 2) COLLECT MONEY FOR KREW

The most difficult part of the mission is keeping your bike from being blown up. You'll need to go through the mission a few times to learn where all the money bags are. When you collect one, slow down a bit and look for the next one on your minimap.

Stay low and run over the Krimzon Guards whenever possible so that they don't shoot at you when you're passing by. Also, plan to switch vehicles at least once. (It's extremely difficult to make it through using just one vehicle.) Practice switching vehicles in midair; this technique will help you avoid losing the time you need to get to the next money bag.

### 3) DESTROY EQUIPMENT AT DIG

The most difficult part of this mission is dealing with the Krimzon Guards' deadly accuracy. There are two ways to approach this mission. The first is to go directly after the support cables. Although fun, this is effective only if you play through the mission a bunch of times and know where all the routes go. The easier of the two methods is to take out all the Krimzon Guards, then go back at your leisure and attempt to take out the support cables without the fear of being knocked off. You must use your hoverboard to grind the rails grounding the support cables. Be very careful around ledges—it's easy to fall to your death there.

### 5) HUNT HAVEN FOREST METAL HEADS

The most difficult part of this mission is making it through without dying. There isn't an abundance of health crates to help you out with this one, so come into this mission with full health. There are plenty of health crates in the mountain area before you enter the forest.

There are two ways to spot a Camouflaged Metal Head: one is his beady little glowing eyes, and the other is his huge, glowing Metal Head Gem. So, you're strolling along, taking out Camouflaged Metal Heads and collecting Metal Head Gems, feeling pretty confident that you've made it halfway through with only half your life gone, when BAM—you run into one, he shoots, and you're dead. No problem—you just have to do it again more carefully this time, right? Wrong. The only clue to the location of the Metal Heads you already killed are those beady little glowing eyes, because you already collected their Metal Head Gems. So, you really want to try to make this mission in one go. Four tips will help with this mission:

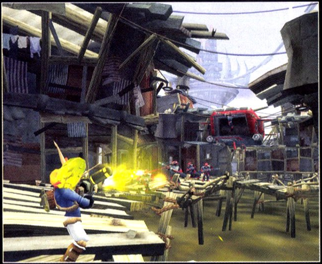
1) Attempt to get through in one pass
2) Autotargeting weapons help a bit
3) Try to start this mission during the night, because it makes it easier to see the glowing parts of the Camouflaged Metal Heads
4) Don't stand still—you will get hit.

### CRASH BASH: WHAT HAPPENED?!?

Naughty Dog was no longer in control of the Crash franchise. Jason Rubin referred to that moment as Crash's "fat Elvis period."

### CTR: CRASH TEAM RACING

Naughty Dog's incredible kart racer is easily the best available on either PS1 or PS2.



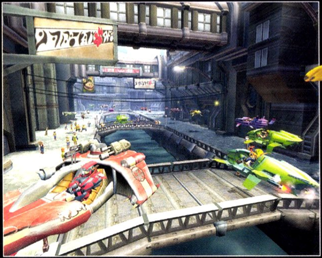
## 6) GET THE SEAL PIECE AT THE WATER SLUMS

This is a difficult mission in general; it gives affirmation to the old adage, "Slow and steady wins the race." Don't try to rush—take your time and slowly move forward as you shoot the guards. Try to kill them in a manner that makes them die on the dock so that you can collect the ammo they drop. Watch your minimap for guards moving in from other directions. It's easiest to keep the camera focused in the direction you're moving and to shoot back toward the direction of the incoming guards—that way, you can keep a constant eye on what's ahead of you. Try not to rush up on the drop ships—they have laser guns that don't miss. Just stay back and take out the guards being dropped off until the ship flies away. Then move forward and collect the ammo. Make sure you know which way you're going so that you don't end up at a dead end and have to come back through a new set of enemies. The easiest way to do this, other than learning the layout of the docks, is to look at your map and then watch yourself on the minimap to make sure you're going in the right direction.

## 7) DESTROY FIVE HELLCAT CRUISERS

The easiest way to complete this mission is to take out a Hellcat Cruiser and then hide until the alarm goes off. Grab the ammo by Torn's Hideout, jump in a two- or three-seated vehicle (they can take more damage), and slowly head toward one of the Hellcat Cruisers without hitting any Krimzon Guards or their vehicles. We don't want to set off the alarm early.

Now, nudge up against the back of the Hellcat Cruiser; it won't take off or start shooting if you're only nudging against it. Once you start shooting at the Hellcat Cruiser, it's going to try to make a run for it. Make sure you can take it out before it gets away or starts turning on you—avoid having to chase it down. Now, open up and destroy it. Once the Hellcat Cruiser is destroyed, make your way to an alleyway or a cove in the city and hide until the alarm goes off. Then grab another vehicle and proceed as before until the mission is complete.



## 8) ESCORT MEN THROUGH SEWERS

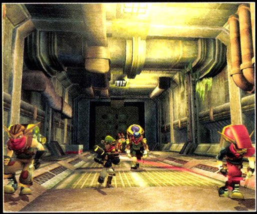
This mission has three difficult parts. They aren't too tough by themselves, but the fact that they happen to be the last three sections and you've most likely taken damage (with no health crates along the way) makes them much more daunting. After descending on the second lift and traveling down the hallway, you'll come to the first difficult task. As you approach the corner that rounds to the right, three Metal Heads will begin firing their lasers. Watching the pattern and entering the laser mesh at the right time will beat this. Jump in and continue to jump forward, avoiding the beams while firing an autotargeting weapon, and you'll take them out.

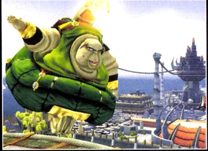
Directly after defeating the Metal Heads, you'll see three more lasers coming from around the corner to the left. The easiest way to defeat them is to get on your JET-Board and jump over the beams toward the steel grate ramp directly in front of you, which leads to the other side of the pipes. Then, flank them from their left side. Don't get caught in the beams while on your JET-Board, though, or you'll be mincemeat.

Just after passing this section, the last of the rubble-clearing bombs is set—which is when the fun begins. The walls seem to be crawling with Metal Heads coming from all directions.

The best way to defeat this section is to stay close to the men you are defending. If you move too far away from them, the Metal Heads will drop in behind you, and that will make it even tougher to beat. You can use any weapon you want, but the most effective plan is to have full Scatter Gun Ammo ready when you get there. This, of course, hits multiple targets at once and blows the Metal Heads back away from the men you're defending. You don't want them to get much closer than just over the lip coming out of the water before you run forward a bit and blow them all back. Any closer and they'll start to use their lasers.

After blowing back the Metal Heads, run back toward the men. Continue this process until they are all defeated.





## 9) BEAT KREW IN WEAPONS LAB

The easiest way to avoid getting hit by the Mini-Krew apparitions is to keep moving in one direction around the platform. Stay to the outside so that you don't get caught up on anything and take out the crates as often as possible to get more ammo—they will respawn. Don't stand in one place for too long, or you'll be surrounded and get hit.

A set number of apparitions will spawn before you get to take on Krew himself. Krew has a three-step life meter, and you get to take out each section only after defeating a set of apparitions. The easiest way to defeat this level is to use the Scatter Gun on the Mini-Krew apparitions while you're moving around the platform to keep them as far away from you as possible. During the fights with Krew, use any weapon except the Vulcan Fury Gun—Krew has a high tolerance for this weapon. Watch the gun above Krew's head—it always lights up just before it shoots. If you time it right, he may get off only one shot before you let him have it.

## DAXTER RULES!

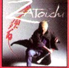
**Give him his own game!**

He might not have much of a role in the gameplay, but Daxter is still the true star of this series. We love him!

## 10) DESTROY METAL KOR AT NEST

We're not going to show you a pic of this; the boss is extremely cool looking, and we want our guide to be spoiler free. This is, of course, one of the toughest missions, and rightly so. There are three stages to this mission. Throughout all the stages, taking out Kor is your main objective, but you can't ignore the Metal Heads around you. Take them out first. Try to take them out when they're in egg form, before they hatch, and don't let them overwhelm you in a corner. One of the easiest ways to get away before they get in close is to hop on your JET-Board and ride around the ring away from them. This is also the easiest way to get ammo from the crates while avoiding getting hit. Sooner or later, though, you're going to have to get off the JET-Board and face them. Use the Jump-Spin and Shoot combo with the Blaster to take out multiple targets. When you see a lull in the onslaught of Metal Heads coming at you, take a few pot shots at Kor—but make sure you avoid Kor's blasts coming at you. Keep an eye on his head; when it begins to glow, start rolling out of the way. He'll fire one blast in the first stage, two in the second, and three in the third.

During the third stage, shoot at Kor until he gets close, jump on your JET-Board and get away, then jump off and repeat. Watch his head and avoid his blasts. Also, watch out for his Shockwave when he falls to the ground and then jump over it. Good luck!



**BEST BLIND FIGHTER EVER IS...**
Zatoichi, a legendary blind swordsman from ancient Japan.

# SOUL CALIBUR II

## Vicious strategies for Voldo

*We asked for suggestions on who to spotlight next, and Voldo was the winner. He might be the kinkiest character, but he's also the most challenging, so here's some help in using him, courtesy of the Bradygames guide.*

## Strengths

Voldo is nothing if not the master of freakiness. It isn't just Voldo's wide range of disturbing costumes, gestures, and actions; this monster has techniques that extend his mind game even further. Voldo can close against foes while crawling on all fours or crab walking, run away from people, or leap around the screen at will. Hissing all the while, Voldo makes it very hard to concentrate on what attack is next in a lineup.

Voldo's damage and ability to control a fight are pretty impressive as well. Many of Voldo's attacks can knock people down and batter them severely, and there are ways to minimize the risks for making these strikes. With a wide assortment of guard cancels, Voldo certainly becomes a useful character for anyone who likes to outsmart opponents instead of using pure instincts and reflexes.

It's also useful that Voldo has a well-balanced set of launch, juggle, and wakeup skills. Because all of these are effective, Voldo players can mix a wide range of attacks so that victims of a launch have no idea what to expect. Air controlling might put foes in an even worse situation if the Voldo player is one step ahead of them, and that uncertainty makes everything hectic for opponents.

## Weaknesses

Although it isn't hard to learn Voldo's basic game, he has a weak point for players who start to learn his higher-level tricks; it takes a bit off of someone's game to start implementing all of Voldo's eccentric moves. Thus, there are times when Voldo slips in power while players adapt and integrate new skills into their routines. This isn't a huge weakness, but it bears mentioning.

If Voldo isn't used to his fullest—in regard to guard cancels, fast recoveries, and deception—he can seem like a somewhat slow character. Many of the faster characters in the game won't have too hard a time mopping the floor with him if both players try to have a slugfest. Voldo requires a sense of tactics; people who rely solely on speed and a quick response to problems won't get the most out of him.

There are so many exotic moves in Voldo's list that his players often try for attacks that aren't safe. This is hard to resist because Voldo is fun to play with a reckless air. Crawling around on the floor and leaping onto people's heads won't work too often, but trying for these attacks and hearing opponents' reactions is worth the difficulty.

## Path to Mastery

Because Voldo is such an interesting character to control, it takes a while before players see everything he is capable of doing. This strategy section tries to introduce some of the easier elements of advanced Voldo play before getting into the more treacherous (and rewarding) techniques.

### KEY VOLDO ATTACKS

**Blade Nail** (⇨△△) is a two-hit move that Voldo can use under a wide range of conditions. If the initial hit is ducked, the second attack hits crouching defenders. Blade Nail is one of Voldo's staple moves because it is fast enough to act as a sensible counterhit against most foes. If this attack does connect as a counterhit, continue to add pressure with a low attack, perhaps using a Caliostro Rush move called Snake Eater (during Caliostro Rush, □+△), or Scorpion Tail (⬀○) to land a mid-launcher.

**Demon Elbow** (⇨⇨△) is a fast charge into a midattack that is intended to stop aggressive opponents during a wanton rush. Although difficult to use in the middle of existing combos, Demon Elbow is fast enough to get Voldo into attack range against slow, long-range characters that want to play keep-away games.

**Blind Drop** (⇨⇨○) covers territory quickly as well, hitting mid twice and putting both Voldo and his victim on the ground on a successful hit. A simple Blind Drop Kick (During Blind Stance, ⇩○) straightens Voldo out and slaps any victim who doesn't defend against a low attack before getting up. Roll away from the opponent for Voldo to get into a more useful position, then consider using Blind Dive (⬂□+△) if foes try to come forward too soon. Mix this with a more complex midstrike after training people to stay low. For example, attack with Blind Drop, then go into Mantis Crawl when Voldo rises into his Blind Stance posture (Blind Stance, ⇩□+○ to Mantis Crawl). From there, attack with Asylum Breakout (Mantis Crawl, △).

**Scorpion Tail** (⬀○) isn't limited to use after a counterhit. Indeed, this launcher is reasonably quick for what it does, and its animation is odd enough to complicate matters for beginners and veterans alike.

**Blind Blade** (⬇ or ⬆□) is safe on block and acts as a very sensible move to deal with fast charges when Blade Nail just won't be fast enough. After connecting, Voldo is in a good position for flowing into another attack. Mix successes with fast low attacks and powerful mids.

**Despair** (⬇ or ⬆△) keeps Voldo low and also serves well to give him a huge advantage on hit, staggering foes in the process. Going under wide horizontal slashes during an opponent's charge should be paired with Despair and a fast Rat Cheeze (⇩□□□). Another solid rush stopper against people who keep trying to get inside is Mouse Cutter (⬀□).

### JUGGLES AND WAKEUP TRICKS

After succeeding with a Scorpion Tail, Voldo has a number of good choices. To deal safe damage without wasting time, use a Blade Nail, then another Scorpion Tail or a Praying Mantis (□+△).

To sow confusion, after an opponent expects these attacks, delay a moment after a future launch and use Evil Bow (⇩□+△). If this hits after the opponent has landed and started to rise, the victim is plowed back onto the ground. This is a nice mix-up to hurt anyone who wants to make a Quick Recovery and counterattack.

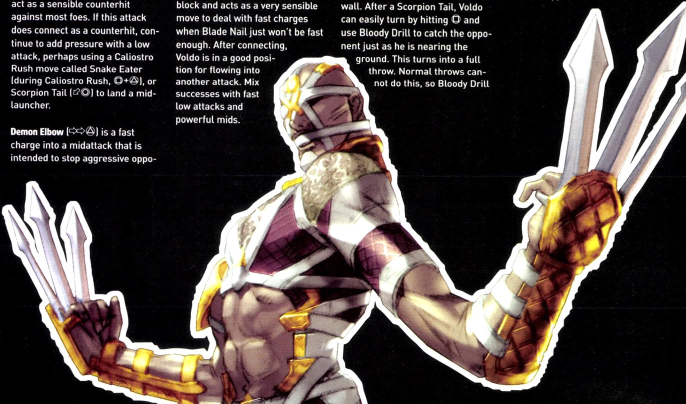
**Bloody Drill** (○+⊗), one of Voldo's interesting throws, has an element of abuse potential during launch games. After hitting a target with a light juggle (even a simple □ or ○), Bloody Drill has a chance to catch opponents before they have completely landed. The easiest example of this is done when an opponent is near the wall. After a Scorpion Tail, Voldo can easily turn by hitting □ and use Bloody Drill to catch the opponent just as he is nearing the ground. This turns into a full throw. Normal throws cannot do this, so Bloody Drill gets a nod of approval for use in these scenarios.

The following combo requires a successful counterhit to succeed, but the final damage tally is worth the initial setup time. From an existing crouch, use Scorpion Claw (While Rising, □) and follow a counterhit with Mad Shredder (⇩⬂⇨△△△).

### GETTING AROUND

Although very hard to master, an option is to input ⇩⬀⇦ when Voldo first enters Blind Stance to run away from opponents. This works if quickly entered at the end of an attack that naturally sends Voldo into his Blind Stance posture. For instance, a Voldo player who tries to use Dark Shredder (□△□⇦ to Blind Stance) sees that the attacks are being blocked; as soon as the attack series ends and Voldo turns, the player inputs ⇩⬀⇦ and runs off to avoid a counterattack. There are easier moves to use this trick with, and all of them require very specific timing.

For another dose of strange commands, Voldo can charge in with Mantis Crawl—the big deal is that he can do this away from his opponent. When Voldo is in Mantis Crawl feet first, pressing ⇧ or ⇩ rolls him through a Side Stepping motion. As soon as the animation completes, entering ⇦⇦ causes Voldo to skitter away from his opponent.

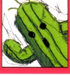


**KEY: D-PAD**
**Hollow Arrow = Tap, Solid Arrow = Hold**

Got any weird and kinky tricks for Voldo that we missed? Tell us about them at opm@ziffdavis.com.

# FFIII/VI

First appearance of the cactuar, then known as cactrot. He became cactuar in *FFVII*.



| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Freedom Fighters** | **EA Games** | ★★★★★ | **73** |
| Freekstyle | EA Sports Big | ★★★★ | 59 |
| Freestyle Metal X | Midway | ★★★ | 71 |
| Frequency | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 52 |
| Frogger: The Great Quest | Konami | ★½ | 53 |
| Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge | Acclaim | ★★★ | 46 |
| Futurama | Vivendi Universal | ★★½ | 72 |
| G1 Jockey 3 | Koei | ★★★½ | 69 |
| Gadget Racers | Conspiracy | ★★★½ | 50 |
| Galerians: Ash | Sammy | ★½ | 66 |
| Gallop Racer | Tecmo | ★★ | 48 |
| Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed | Tecmo | ★★★ | 69 |
| Gauntlet: Dark Legacy | Midway | ★★★½ | 46 |
| The Getaway | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 66 |
| Giants: Citizen Kabuto | Interplay | ★★★½ | 51 |
| Gitaroo-Man | Koei | ★★★½ | 53 |
| Gladius | LucasArts | ★★★★ | 74 |
| Godai: Elemental Force | 3DO | ★½ | 54 |
| Gradius III and IV | Konami | ★★½ | 39 |
| **Gran Turismo 3: A-spec** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **46** |
| Grand Prix Challenge | Atari | ★★★½ | 68 |
| ⑫ **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City** | **Rockstar** | ★★★★★ | **63** |

Of all the cheats in this brilliant game, these are our personal favorites. So, to get on with playing as someone new (although no one's cooler than Vercetti), punch these in during gameplay.

**UNLOCKABLE SKINS**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ricardo Diaz** | L1, L2, R1, R2, ↓, L1, R2, L2 |
| **Lance Vance** | ○, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, ⊗, L1 |
| **Candy Suxxx** | ○, R2, ↓, R1, ←, →, R1, L1, ⊗, L2 |
| **Ken Rosenberg** | →, L1, ↑, L2, L1, →, R1, L1, ⊗, R1 |
| **Hilary King** | R1, ○, R2, L1, →, R1, L1, ⊗, R2 |
| **Love Fist Guy #1** | ↓, L1, ↓, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, ⊗, ⊗ |
| **Love Fist Guy #2** | R1, L2, R2, L1, →, R2, ←, ⊗, □, L1 |
| **Phil Cassidy** | →, R1, ↑, R2, L1, →, R1, L1, →, ○ |
| **Sonny Forelli** | ○, L1, ○, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, ⊗, ⊗ |
| **Mercedes** | R2, L1, ↑, L1, →, R1, →, ↑, ○, △ |

**GENERAL MAYHEM**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Robocops** | ○, L1, ↓, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, →, ⊗ |
| **Pedestrians Have Weapons** | R2, R1, ⊗, △, ⊗, △, ↑, ↓ |
| **Gals Drop Weapons** | →, L1, ○, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, L1, ⊗ |
| **Media Level Meter** | R2, ○, ↑, L1, →, R1, →, ↑, □, △ |
| **Hovering Cars** | →, R2, ○, R1, L2, □, R1, R2 |
| **Strange Wheels** | R1, ⊗, △, →, R2, ○, ↑, ↓, □ |
| **Double Your Car Speed** | R1, R2, L1, L1, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑ |

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grand Theft Auto III** | **Rockstar** | ★★★★★ | **52** |
| Grandia II | Ubisoft | ★★★½ | 53 |
| Grandia Xtreme | Enix | ★★★½ | 62 |
| Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt | Midway | ½ | 61 |
| The Great Escape | Gotham Games | ★★★½ | 72 |
| GTC Africa | Majesco | ★★½ | 58 |
| Guilty Gear X | Majesco/Sammy | ★★★★ | 51 |
| Guilty Gear X2 | Sammy | ★★★★ | 66 |
| Gungrave | Sega | ★★★½ | 61 |
| Gungriffon Blaze | Working Designs | ★★★½ | 39 |
| **Half-Life** | **Sierra** | ★★★★★ | **51** |
| Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets | EA Games | ★★★½ | 64 |
| Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland | Natsume | ★★★★ | 51 |
| Haven: Call of the King | Midway | ★★★½ | 64 |
| Headhunter | Acclaim | ★★★ | 57 |
| Herdy Gerdy | Eidos | ★★★ | 56 |
| Heroes of Might and Magic | 3DO | ★★½ | 46 |
| Hidden Invasion | Conspiracy | ★★★ | 60 |
| High Heat MLB 2002 | 3DO | ★★★★ | 44 |
| High Heat MLB 2003 | 3DO | ★★★★½ | 55 |
| **High Heat MLB 2004** | **3DO** | ★★★★★ | **67** |
| ⑳ **Hitman 2: Silent Assassin** | **Eidos** | ★★★★½ | **63** |

Try these in-game cheats. Input them during gameplay.

**SLOW MOTION** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, Up, L2

One of those tricks that falls into the "not very useful" category.

**FULL HEALTH** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, Up, Down

This one, on the other hand, can be filed under "very useful".

**PUNCH MODE** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, Up, Up

**GRAVITY** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, L2, L2

We're not sure why you'd want this...but here it is anyway.

**LETHAL CHARGE** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, R1, R1

Makes your shots even more effective. One-shot kills are easier to pull off.

**BOMB MODE** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, Up, L1

Does exactly what it says.

**MEGA FORCE** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, R2, R2

Has the amusing effect of making bad guys disappear into the distance when you kill them. (Restart level to remove effects.)

**NAILGUN MODE** R2, L2, Up, Down, ⊗, L1, L1

This one pins people to walls. The effects aren't always obvious—it depends on where you shoot the bad guys. Try shooting corpses for added amusement. Activate this and Mega Force together for added frivolity.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hot Shots Golf 3 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 55 |
| Hot Wheels: Velocity X | THQ | ★★½ | 64 |
| The Hulk | Vivendi Universal | ★★★★ | 70 |
| Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward | Interplay | ★★½ | 72 |
| Hypersonic Xtreme | Majesco | ★★½ | 67 |
| **Ico** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **50** |
| Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb | LucasArts | ★★★ | 71 |
| Indy Car Series | Codemasters | ★★★ | 71 |
| Island Extreme Stunts | EA Games | ★★★½ | 65 |
| The Italian Job | Eidos | ★★ | 72 |
| Jade Cocoon 2 | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 53 |
| **Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **52** |
| Jak II | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 74 |
| James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire | EA Games | ★★★★ | 52 |
| James Bond 007: NightFire | Activision | ★★★★½ | 64 |
| James Cameron's Dark Angel | Sierra | ★★ | 65 |
| Jeremy McGrath Supercross World | Acclaim | ★ | 53 |
| Jet X20 | Sony CEA | ★★ | 63 |
| Jonny Moseley Mad Trix | 3DO | ★½ | 54 |
| The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove | Ubi Soft | ★★★ | 69 |
| Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis | Universal Int. | ★★★★½ | 68 |
| K-1 World Grand Prix | Konami | ★★ | 71 |
| Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer | Activision | ★★★½ | 61 |
| Kengo: Master of Bushido | Crave | ★★★ | 42 |
| Kessen | EA Games | ★★★ | 39 |
| Kessen II | Koei | ★★★ | 51 |
| Kinetica | Sony CEA | ★★★★½ | 50 |
| The King of Route 66 | Sega | ★★★ | 67 |
| King's Field: The Ancient City | Agetec | ★★ | 55 |
| Kingdom Hearts | Square EA | ★★★★½ | 61 |
| Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil | Namco | ★★★★½ | 47 |
| Knockout Kings 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 42 |
| Knockout Kings 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 55 |
| Le Mans 24 Hours | Infogrames | ★★½ | 48 |
| Legaia 2: Duel Saga | Fresh Games | ★★★ | 63 |
| The Legend of Alon D'ar | Ubisoft | ★½ | 54 |
| Legends of Wrestling | Acclaim | ★★½ | 53 |
| Legends of Wrestling II | Acclaim | ★★★ | 65 |
| Legion: The Legend of Excalibur | Midway | ★★★ | 59 |
| Lego Racers 2 | Lego Media | ★★½ | 51 |
| Lethal Skies | Sammy | ★★★ | 58 |
| Lethal Skies II | Sammy | ★★★½ | 74 |
| The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring | Black Label | ★★★½ | 63 |
| The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers | EA Games | ★★★★½ | 63 |
| Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter | Vivendi Universal | ★★ | 71 |
| Mad Maestro! | Eidos/Fresh | ★★★ | 56 |
| Madden NFL 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 38 |
| Madden NFL 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 48 |
| **Madden NFL 2003** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **60** |
| ① **Madden NFL 2004** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **72** |

**CHEAP WAY TO MAKE MONEY** Start a regular game (season or home playoff), save, and then quit. Reload your franchise file, and it will resume where you last saved, but the computer will recharge everyone, so all your ticket sales, concessions, and whatnot will be doubled. This only works when you're the home team, though.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color | Agetec | ★★★★ | 69 |
| The Mark of Kri | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 59 |
| Marvel vs. Capcom 2 | Capcom | ★★★★ | 61 |
| Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 | Activision | ★★★★ | 60 |
| Max Payne | Rockstar | ★★★★ | 53 |
| Maximo: Ghosts to Glory | Capcom | ★★★½ | 54 |

## REPLAY FORUM

**CACTUAR, WHERE?**

Help! I finally got around to buying *FFX* because of the Greatest Hits price, but I want to find all the cactuar now! Can you tell me where they all are?

*Scott Logan*
*Westchester, NY*

Of course we can! Here's a listing of where they are in their proper order.

-Oasis: Near the first save point

-East Sanubia Desert: In the eastern alcove, north of the save-point tent

-West Sanubia Desert: Look around the sign near the cactuar rock that says the nonsensical &#8220;20% off&#8221;.

-Central Sanubia Desert: Near the western ruins; keep an eye out for two cactuars randomly running around the desert.

-East Sanubia Desert again: Near the save point under the tent

-West Sanubia Desert again: Go far west, and you'll see a locked treasure chest—he's trapped inside.

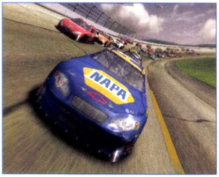
-Sanubia Desert (Central): Inside one of the sand whirlpools. You'll need to leave and reenter the area.

-Oasis again: Teleport to the airship and check the outside deck.

-Sanubia Desert: Come back to the cactuar statue, and the last one appears right behind you.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| MDK2 Armageddon | Interplay | ★★★½ | 45 |
| **Medal of Honor: Frontline** | **EA Games** | ★★★★★ | **58** |
| Mega Man X7 | Capcom | ★★★½ | 74 |
| Men in Black II: Alien Escape | Infogrames | ★★½ | 60 |
| **Metal Gear Solid 2** | **Konami** | ★★★★★ | **51** |
| **Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance** | **Konami** | ★★★★★ | **67** |
| Metropolismania | Natsume | ★★★ | 61 |
| **Midnight Club** | **Rockstar** | ★★★★ | **39** |
| **Midnight Club II** | **Rockstar** | ★★★★★ | **67** |
| Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing | Codemasters | ★ | 58 |
| Minority Report | Activision | ★★½ | 65 |
| Mister Mosquito | Eidos/Fresh | ★★★½ | 56 |
| MLB 2004 | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 67 |
| MLB Slugfest 20-03 | Midway | ★★★★ | 59 |
| MLB Slugfest 20-04 | Midway | ★★★★ | 67 |
| Mobile Light Force 2 | XS Games | ★★★½ | 69 |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon | Bandai | ★★★½ | 61 |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo | Bandai | ★ | 48 |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front | Bandai | ★★★ | 54 |
| Mojo! | Crave | ★★½ | 73 |
| Monopoly Party | Infogrames | ★★★ | 65 |
| Monster Rancher 3 | Tecmo | ★★★★ | 50 |
| Monsters, Inc. | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 55 |
| Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance | Midway | ★★★★ | 64 |
| MotoGP | Namco | ★★★★ | 39 |
| MotoGP2 | Namco | ★★★★½ | 53 |
| MotoGP3 | Namco | ★★★★½ | 67 |
| Motor Mayhem | Infogrames | ★★★ | 47 |
| MTV Music Generator 2 | Codemasters | ★★★ | 46 |
| The Mummy Returns | Universal | ★½ | 52 |
| Music Maker | Magix | ★★★★ | 69 |
| MVP Baseball 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 67 |
| MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael | THQ | ★★★★ | 47 |
| MX Rider | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 52 |
| MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael | THQ | ★★★½ | 59 |
| My Street | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 67 |
| Myst III: Exile | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 63 |
| Mystic Heroes | Koei | ★★½ | 64 |
| Namco Museum | Namco | ★★★½ | 53 |
| NASCAR 2001 | EA Sports | ★★½ | 40 |
| NASCAR Heat | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 47 |
| NASCAR Thunder 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 51 |
| NASCAR Thunder 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 62 |
| ⑤ **NASCAR Thunder 2004** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **73** |

**OPENING MOVIES WITH CAMEOS** Just choose Create-a-Car and put this in as your name: Seymour Cameos.

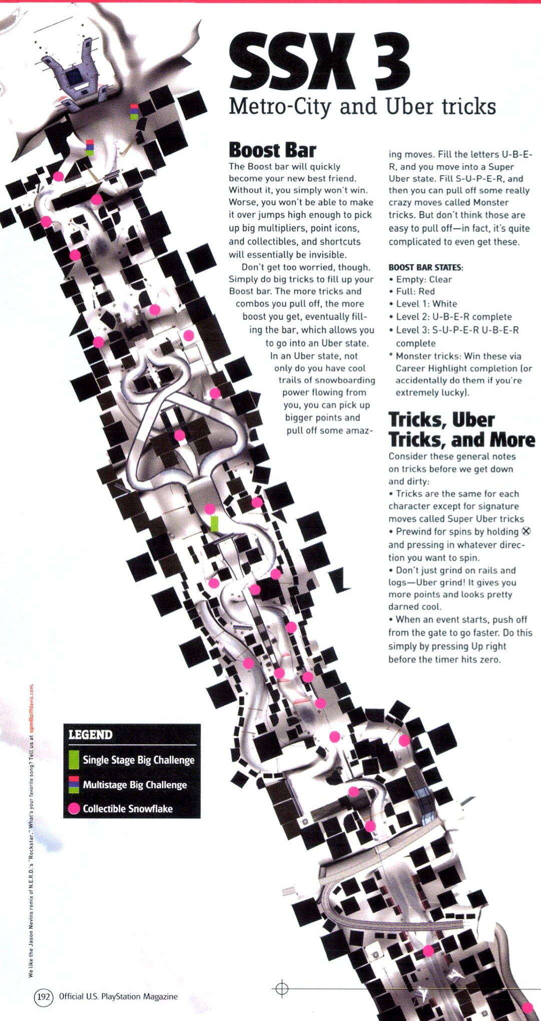


| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 63 |
| Naval Ops: Warship Gunner | Koei | ★★★ | 71 |
| **NBA 2K2** | **Sega Sports** | ★★★★★ | **53** |
| **NBA 2K3** | **Sega Sports** | ★★★★★ | **63** |
| NBA Hoopz | Midway | ★★★ | 44 |
| NBA Live 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 42 |
| NBA Live 2002 | EA Sports | ★★½ | 51 |
| NBA Live 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 63 |
| NBA ShootOut 2001 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 44 |
| NBA ShootOut 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 63 |
| NBA Starting Five | Konami | ★★½ | 63 |
| **NBA Street** | **EA Sports Big** | ★★★★★ | **47** |
| **NBA Street Vol. 2** | **EA Sports Big** | ★★★★★ | **68** |
| NCAA College Basketball 2K3 | Sega Sports | ★★★★ | 64 |

**SSX: DVD**
*SSX Tricky* was originally going to be a mere expansion for the original *SSX*.

# SSX 3

## Metro-City and Uber tricks



### Boost Bar

The Boost bar will quickly become your new best friend. Without it, you simply won't win. Worse, you won't be able to make it over jumps high enough to pick up big multipliers, point icons, and collectibles, and shortcuts will essentially be invisible.

Don't get too worried, though. Simply do big tricks to fill up your Boost bar. The more tricks and combos you pull off, the more boost you get, eventually filling the bar, which allows you to go into an Uber state. In an Uber state, not only do you have cool trails of snowboarding power flowing from you, you can pick up bigger points and pull off some amazing moves. Fill the letters U-B-E-R, and you move into a Super Uber state. Fill S-U-P-E-R, and then you can pull off some really crazy moves called Monster tricks. But don't think those are easy to pull off—in fact, it's quite complicated to even get these.

**BOOST BAR STATES:**

- Empty: Clear
- Full: Red
- Level 1: White
- Level 2: U-B-E-R complete
- Level 3: S-U-P-E-R U-B-E-R complete

* Monster tricks: Win these via Career Highlight completion (or accidentally do them if you're extremely lucky).

### Tricks, Uber Tricks, and More

Consider these general notes on tricks before we get down and dirty:

- Tricks are the same for each character except for signature moves called Super Uber tricks
- Prewind for spins by holding ⊗ and pressing in whatever direction you want to spin.
- Don't just grind on rails and logs—Uber grind! It gives you more points and looks pretty darned cool.
- When an event starts, push off from the gate to go faster. Do this simply by pressing Up right before the timer hits zero.
- Don't do the same tricks over and over during a combo because repeated tricks score lower.
- Balance your rail slides and handplants with the left analog stick. Not only does this help you keep combos going, it can change your direction while sliding or doing a handplant, which often helps you find new areas.
- Uber tricks are worth more than regular tricks, and Super Ubers are worth more than Ubers. Monster tricks are worth the most.
- Uber tricks are available only when you're in Uber Boost mode; likewise, Super Ubers are only available in Super Uber Boost mode (and because Monster tricks always involve a Super Uber trick, this also applies to Monster tricks).
- Keep this equation in mind: Tricks = points = money. Specifically, 500 points equals $1. However, there's a cap. Once you hit 10,000 points and above, you get a flat $20. Sure, it doesn't seem like much, but it adds up quickly, and before you know it, you'll be making thousands of dollars just by practicing! If you're looking for quick cash, transport to one of the Super Pipes and go for a Free Ride. Those back-to-back big airs add up really quickly.

**BASIC TRICKS**

You'll need to know how to pull off the basic moves. But come to think about it, we use the term "basic" lightly. After all, you can combine any of the grabs below with forward and backward flips, not to mention spins, Uber tricks and Super Ubers. For instance, to do a frontflip Stalefish, you would jump and hold R1 while pressing forward on the D-pad. Remember, too, that Monster tricks are combinations of a Super Uber with one of the moves listed below. All of this makes the following list indispensable.

**TRICK LIST**

| Trick name | Buttons |
|---|---|
| Stalefish | R1 |
| Method | L1 |
| Indy | R2 |
| Mute | L2 |
| Tailgrab | R1 + R2 |
| Nosegrab | L1 + L2 |
| Melancholy | L1 + R1 |
| Swiss Cheese | L2 + R2 |
| Lein | R1 + L2 |
| Stiffy | L1 + R2 |
| Chicken Salad | R1 + R2 + L1 |
| Spaghetti | R1 + R2 + L2 |
| Stalemasky | L1 + L2 + R1 |
| Seatbelt | L1 + L2 + R2 |
| Shifty | L1 + (L2 + R2) + R1 + R2 |

**UBER AND SUPER UBER TRICKS**

Here are all of the Uber and Super Uber tricks in the game. For those listed as level 1, you simply need to have the Boost bar filled. For those listed as level 2, you need to have U-B-E-R spelled out. Then you can move onto Super Ubers, but keep in mind that not all Super Uber tricks are available at the start. You purchase level 3 Super Uber tricks at each of the Lodges on the three peaks. In addition, you can customize which Super Ubers tricks you have access to at a given time.

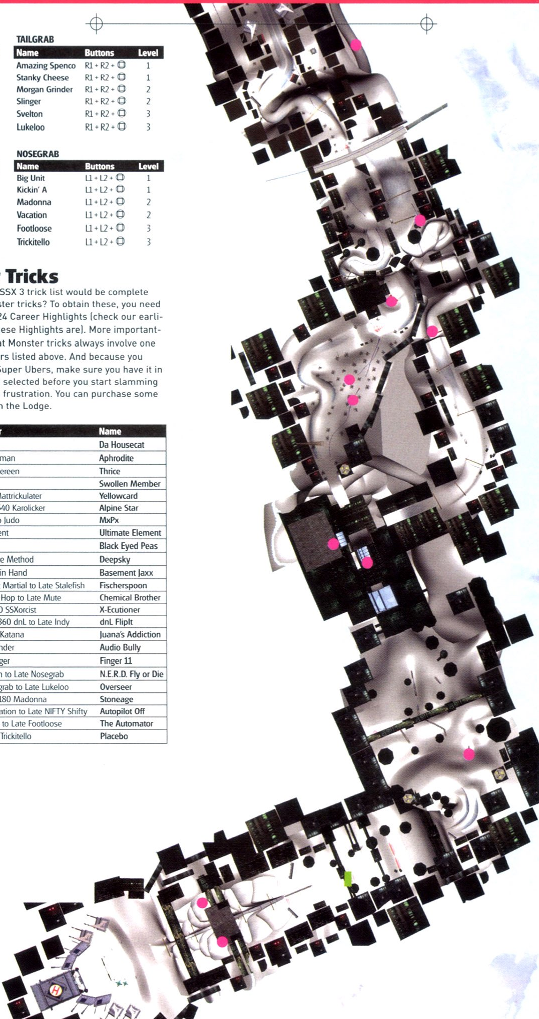
COLLECT: 1/40
$ 800,744
SUPER
UBER
13770
75
MPH

We like the Jason Nevins remix of N.E.R.D.'s "Rockstar." What's your favorite song? Tell us at opm@ziffdavis.com.

Map continued on facing page.

## THANK PRIMA WITH US!

This neat map and the tricks list were both courtesy of the Prima Guide for *SSX 3*.



**STALEFISH**

| Name | Buttons | Level |
|---|---|---|
| Springer | R1 + □ | 1 |
| Tricky Flicky | R1 + □ | 1 |
| G-Money | R1 + □ | 2 |
| Superman | R1 + □ | 2 |
| Smithereen | R1 + □ | 3 |
| Torpedo | R1 + □ | 3 |

**METHOD**

| Name | Buttons | Level |
|---|---|---|
| Reach Around | L1 + □ | 1 |
| Mahogany | L1 + □ | 1 |
| Jib-O | L1 + □ | 2 |
| Indian | L1 + □ | 2 |
| Hand in Hand | L1 + □ | 3 |
| Kort Martial | L1 + □ | 3 |

**TAILGRAB**

| Name | Buttons | Level |
|---|---|---|
| Amazing Spenco | R1 + R2 + □ | 1 |
| Stanky Cheese | R1 + R2 + □ | 1 |
| Morgan Grinder | R1 + R2 + □ | 2 |
| Slinger | R1 + R2 + □ | 2 |
| Svelton | R1 + R2 + □ | 3 |
| Lukeloo | R1 + R2 + □ | 3 |

**INDY**

| Name | Buttons | Level |
|---|---|---|
| Extended Play | R2 + □ | 1 |
| Can Opened | R2 + □ | 1 |
| Mattrickulater | R2 + □ | 2 |
| Karolicker | R2 + □ | 2 |
| Judo | R2 + □ | 3 |
| Element | R2 + □ | 3 |

**MUTE**

| Name | Buttons | Level |
|---|---|---|
| Clean Sweep | L2 + □ | 1 |
| Counter Point | L2 + □ | 1 |
| Bar Hop | L2 + □ | 2 |
| SSXorcist | L2 + □ | 2 |
| dnL | L2 + □ | 3 |
| Katana | L2 + □ | 3 |

**NOSEGRAB**

| Name | Buttons | Level |
|---|---|---|
| Big Unit | L1 + L2 + □ | 1 |
| Kickin' A | L1 + L2 + □ | 1 |
| Madonna | L1 + L2 + □ | 2 |
| Vacation | L1 + L2 + □ | 2 |
| Footloose | L1 + L2 + □ | 3 |
| Trickitello | L1 + L2 + □ | 3 |

## Career Highlights

Career Highlights are specific tasks you need to complete in order to obtain Monster tricks. 24 Highlights to finish means 24 Monster tricks to obtain. It doesn't matter exactly where you accomplish these Highlights, except that it's best to consider the trick type you have to pull off, and then pick an appropriate course. For example, it might be best to pick a Slopestyle course over a Race course if you want to try rail sliding for 10 seconds, because there are so many rails on a Slopestyle course.

| Task | Award |
|---|---|
| Stay on a rail for 25 meters | Da Housecat |
| Stay on a rail for 120 meters | Thrice |
| Stay on a rail for 300 meters | Swollen Member |
| Hold a handplant for 3 seconds | Yellowcard |
| Hold a handplant for 5 seconds | Alpine Star |
| Hold a handplant for 8 seconds | MxPx |
| Stay in air for 5 seconds | Aphrodite |
| Stay in air for 8 seconds | Ultimate dnL BOOST |
| Stay in air for 10 seconds | Deepsky |
| Knock down 3 people in a race | Fischerspoon |
| Knock down 6 people in a race | Basement Jaxx |
| Knock down 10 people in a race | N.E.R.D. Fly or Die |
| Do 5 Uber grinds in 1 event | Finger 11 |
| Do 8 Uber grinds in 1 event | Autopilot Off |
| Do 10 Uber grinds in 1 event | The Automator |
| Do 5 Ubers in 1 event | Black Eyed Peas |
| Do 8 Ubers in 1 event | Placebo |
| Do 10 Ubers in 1 event | Overseer |
| Get 150,000 in 1 event | Chemical Brother |
| Get 500,000 in 1 event | Ultimate dnL FLIPIT |
| Get 1,000,000 in 1 event | X-Ecutioner |
| Do a 10X combo in an event | Audio Bully |
| Do a 20X combo in an event | Stoneage |
| Do a 100X combo in an event | Juana's Addiction |

## Monster Tricks

And really, what SSX 3 trick list would be complete without the Monster tricks? To obtain these, you need to complete the 24 Career Highlights (check our earlier list on what these Highlights are). More importantly, remember that Monster tricks always involve one of the Super Ubers listed above. And because you must buy some Super Ubers, make sure you have it in your arsenal and selected before you start slamming on the buttons in frustration. You can purchase some of these moves in the Lodge.

| Move + Super Uber | Name |
|---|---|
| FS 540 G-Money | Da Housecat |
| Triple Backflip Superman | Aphrodite |
| FS Rodeo 720 Smithereen | Thrice |
| BS 720 Torpedo | Swollen Member |
| BS 900 Kickin' the Mattrickulater | Yellowcard |
| FS Double Backflip 540 Karolicker | Alpine Star |
| Backflip Nosegrab to Judo | MxPx |
| FS Rodeo 720 Element | Ultimate Element |
| BS 900 Jib-O | Black Eyed Peas |
| FS 900 Indian to Late Method | Deepsky |
| BS Misty 900 Hand in Hand | Basement Jaxx |
| BS Backflip 360 Kort Martial to Late Stalefish | Fischerspoon |
| Double Backflip Bar Hop to Late Mute | Chemical Brother |
| FS Triple Backflip 180 SSXorcist | X-Ecutioner |
| FS Double Frontflip 360 dnL to Late Indy | dnL FlipIt |
| BS 720 Indy to Late Katana | Juana's Addiction |
| FS 1080 Morgan Grinder | Audio Bully |
| BS Backflip 360 Slinger | Finger 11 |
| FS Misty 720 Svelton to Late Nosegrab | N.E.R.D. Fly or Die |
| Triple Backflip Nosegrab to Late Lukeloo | Overseer |
| BS Double Backflip 180 Madonna | Stoneage |
| Double Backflip Vacation to Late NIFTY Shifty | Autopilot Off |
| BS 360 NIFTY Shifty to Late Footloose | The Automator |
| BS 540 Indy to Late Trickitello | Placebo |

0/30
$ 800,000
SUPER
UBER
36
MPH

**DEVO-MANIA**
Mark Mothersbaugh, frontman for Devo ("Whip It Good"), did the soundtrack for *Crash 3*.

# CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE

## Finding the three secret whips

*You're probably wondering why there are only two whips in the game. Actually, there are five total; three are being held by hidden Elementals. Here's where to find each of these fools, and how to take them down and claim some whip goodness.*

### Fire Elemental

**WHERE?** Anti-Soul Mysteries Lab. Get to the second floor, find the main hallway with the save point, then continue east. Go into the room with the long hallway and the moving floor; ride said floor down the center. Use your whip on the golden poles to reach the hidden boss door.

**HOW?** Use the Whip of Ice, duh. If you don't have that handy, you can use your trusty Whip of Alchemy. When attacking the Fire Elemental, use combo attacks that emphasize the Triangle button—he can block most attacks that use the Square button. The tricky thing with this guy is that he first uses a string of heavy slashes that will break through your normal block. You have to pull off a perfect block in order to repel these attacks. Since the timing of a perfect block is tricky, we suggest just running the heck away, and maybe jumping, to avoid these swings. Occasionally, he'll switch to one big slash, which you can easily run around. Then you can hit him from another position. He follows up his slash attacks with a jumping flame attack—he jumps in the air and smashes his sword into the ground, causing flames to spew up. You can usually block the flame, but instead, you should actually try to hit him when he's recovering from the attack—it's an obvious pause in his pattern. Put the hurt on him and you'll eventually earn the Whip of Flames.

### Ice Elemental

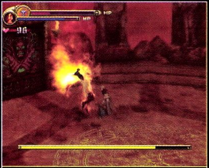
**WHERE?** The Dark Palace Of Waterfalls. First, go to the Anti-Soul Mysteries Lab and get the Wolf's Foot relic. It's behind a door for which you'll need the Red Phoenix key, which is near the courtyard area in the Garden Forgotten By Time. The Wolf's Foot relic will make it much easier to reach the room you need to get to. In any case, make your way past the skull ride and into the series of Y-intersections. Go to the Y-intersection near the start point and head southeast. Eventually, you'll be in a room where there's a cutout of a door on the wall. In order to open this wall, wait for the Heavy Armor to take aim with his mace. Dodge it at the last second and his mace will crash through the wall. Once you're in that room, you need to use creative jumping and whipping to make your way up the ledges. The last ledge at the top is the one for which you'll want the Wolf's Foot relic; otherwise, good luck running, jumping, and whipping your way up there. Once you get to the top, you'll be at the hidden boss door.

**HOW?** Hopefully, you'll have the Whip of Flames (or maybe you're fighting the Ice Elemental first, to make fighting the Fire guy easier). Like the other two, the best time to hit her is either when she's recovering from pulling off a big attack or when she's charging up for a big attack—after she charges up her arm and runs at you, while she's standing still and charging up her laser, after she shoots the ice crystals, or after she sends out a shockwave. Try to evade her attacks, as most are not blockable, and the shockwave in particular will paralyze. Eventually, you'll get the Whip of Ice from her.

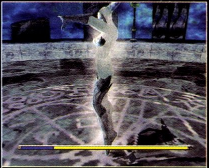
### Lightning Elemental

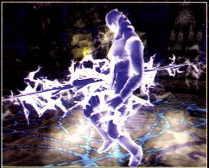
**WHERE?** Garden Forgotten By Time. Work your way to the second room, where there's a Man-Eating Plant (it'll be north of a room featuring a Mist and a Shadow Wolf). Whip said plant until it's under the ledge in the northeast corner of the room. Use the plant to get up onto the ledge and get into the next room. Hit both levers (behind the statues) and you'll see that the door in the wall has a platform underneath it. Jump to the platform and get through the door before the platform disappears again. In the next room, use your whip to latch onto a lightpole, then work your way across the platforms to the southern door. Go through, ascend the tower, and, in the next room, whip the statue. In the east hallway after this room is the hidden boss door.

**HOW?** Thunder is probably the toughest of the three Elementals. In fact, he's resistant to the two other Elementals' whips, so don't bother arming them. Instead, use Ax- or Knife-based attacks. Like the Fire Elemental, this guy likes to jump into the air and slam his dual-sword thingy onto the ground, creating a lightning explosion. Run around and smack him from behind, like you did to the Fire Elemental. Again, like the Fire Elemental, he'll use a series of slashes; avoid them if you can. He's also vulnerable when he charges at you; you can dodge this and hit him from behind as he slams into a wall. He also likes to stand still and zap lightning from his sword. Dodge all of these lightning blasts and keep hitting him whenever he does either the jump or the charge attack, and you'll earn the Whip of Lightning.



Strike while the iron is hot!


Cool her down with your slick moves.


Charge at him when he's charging up.

Can you find all of the secret items in *Castlevania: LOI*? Send your relic-hunting exploits to opm@ziffdavis.com.

# THE ENTIRE NATO ALPHABET (WHAT MILITARY FORCES USE AS CODEWORDS)

Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, Foxtrot, Golf, Hotel, India, Juliet, Kilo, Lima, Mike, November, Oscar, Papa, Quebec, Romeo, Sierra, Tango, Uniform, Victor, Whiskey, X-ray, Yankee, Zulu

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NCAA College Football 2K3 | Sega Sports | ★★½ | 60 |
| NCAA Final Four 2001 | Sony CEA | ★ | 41 |
| NCAA Final Four 2002 | 989 Sports | ★½ | 52 |
| NCAA Final Four 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 64 |
| NCAA Football 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 48 |
| **NCAA Football 2003** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **60** |
| ⑬ **NCAA Football 2004** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **71** |

**TOUCHDOWN CELEBRATIONS** If you wanna be like those boys in the NFL and do a little dance (maybe make a little love?) whenever you score a touchdown, just press the following button combos whenever you see "touchdown" onscreen.

L2+□ Player spikes the ball, points to crowd, then beats his chest.
L2+△ Player bows to the crowd.
L2+○ Player spikes the ball, then shrugs his shoulders.
L2+✕ Player does Heisman Trophy pose.
R2+□ Player will dunk on the Goal Post.
R2+△ Player will punch the ball toward the crowd.
R2+○ Player will kick the ball into the crowd.
R2+✕ Player will throw the ball to the crowd.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NCAA GameBreaker 2001 | Sony CEA | ★½ | 41 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★ | 61 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 2004 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 73 |
| NCAA March Madness 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 53 |
| NCAA March Madness 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 64 |
| **Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2** | **EA Games** | ★★★★★ | **62** |
| **NFL 2K2** | **Sega Sports** | ★★★½ | **52** |
| NFL 2K3 | Sega Sports | ★★★★½ | 60 |
| NFL Blitz 20-02 | Midway | ★★★★ | 55 |
| NFL Blitz 20-03 | Midway | ★★★½ | 60 |
| NFL Blitz Pro | Midway Sports | ★★★ | 74 |
| NFL GameDay 2001 | Sony CEA | ★ | 40 |
| NFL GameDay 2002 | Sony CEA | ★½ | 53 |
| NFL GameDay 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 61 |
| NFL GameDay 2004 | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 73 |
| NFL Quarterback Club 2001 | Acclaim | ★★½ | 50 |
| NHL 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 38 |
| NHL 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 50 |
| NHL 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 63 |
| ⑦ **NHL 2004** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★ | **73** |

Our resident hockey expert is busy being Canadian at the moment, so we don't have any tricks or codes for you NHL heads. Maybe you can help your fellow readers out by writing to opm@ziffdavis.com with some pointers.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NHL 2K3** | **Sega Sports** | ★★★★★ | **64** |
| NHL FaceOff 2001 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 43 |
| NHL FaceOff 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★ | 64 |
| NHL Hitz 20-02 | Midway | ★★★★ | 51 |
| NHL Hitz 20-03 | Midway | ★★★★½ | 62 |
| NHL Hitz Pro | Midway | ★★★★ | 73 |
| Ninja Assault | Namco | ★★½ | 61 |
| No One Lives Forever | Sierra | ★★★½ | 56 |
| Okage: Shadow King | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 51 |
| Oni | Rockstar | ★½ | 43 |
| **Onimusha: Warlords** | **Capcom** | ★★★★ | **43** |
| Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny | Capcom | ★★★★ | 60 |
| Orphen: Scion of Sorcery | Activision | ★★★ | 39 |
| Pac-Man Fever | Namco | ★★ | 60 |
| Pac-Man World 2 | Namco | ★★★★½ | 54 |
| PaRappa the Rapper 2 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 53 |
| Paris-Dakar Rally | Acclaim | ★★ | 53 |
| Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat | EA Games | ★★★½ | 55 |
| Portal Runner | 3DO | ★★ | 50 |
| The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage | Bam | ★★ | 65 |
| Pride FC | THQ | ★★★★ | 65 |
| Primal | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 68 |
| Pro Race Driver | Codemasters | ★★★★½ | 65 |
| Project Eden | Eidos | ★★★½ | 52 |
| Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn | TDK Mediactive | ★★½ | 60 |
| P.T.O. IV | Koei | ★★★ | 66 |
| Q-Ball Billiards Master | Take 2 | ★★★½ | 40 |
| Quake III Revolution | EA Games | ★★★★½ | 44 |
| Rally Fusion: Race of Champions | Activision | ★★★ | 64 |
| **Ratchet & Clank** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **63** |
| **Rayman 2: Revolution** | **Ubi Soft** | ★★★★★ | **41** |

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 67 |
| Rayman Arena | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 57 |
| RC Revenge Pro | Acclaim | ★★½ | 41 |
| Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2 | Midway | ★★★★ | 40 |
| Real Pool | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 40 |
| Red Card Soccer 20-03 | Midway | ★★★ | 57 |
| **Red Faction** | **THQ** | ★★★★★ | **46** |
| Red Faction II | THQ | ★★★★ | 63 |
| Reel Fishing III | Natsume | ★★★★ | 72 |
| Reign of Fire | Bam | ★★★½ | 63 |
| **Resident Evil–Code: Veronica X** | **Capcom** | ★★★★½ | **48** |
| Resident Evil: Dead Aim | Capcom | ★★★½ | 70 |
| Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR | Activision | ★★★½ | 71 |
| Rez | Sega | ★★★★½ | 53 |
| Ridge Racer V | Namco | ★★★★½ | 38 |
| Riding Spirits | Bam | ★★★½ | 61 |
| Ring of Red | Konami | ★★★★ | 43 |
| Risk: Global Domination | Atari | ★★★★ | 73 |
| RLH: Run Like Hell | Interplay | ★★★ | 62 |
| Road Kill | Midway | ★★★★ | 74 |
| Road Trip | Conspiracy | ★★★★ | 61 |
| Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown | Capcom | ★★½ | 74 |
| Rocky | Ubi Soft | ★★★★ | 64 |
| Robot Alchemic Drive | Enix | ★★★★ | 63 |
| Robotech: Battlecry | TDK | ★★★½ | 62 |
| Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII | Koei | ★★½ | 60 |
| Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII | Koei | ★★★ | 73 |
| RPG Maker 2 | Agetec | ★★★½ | 74 |
| RTX Red Rock | LucasArts | ★★ | 71 |
| Rugby | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 48 |
| Rugby 2004 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 73 |
| Rumble Racing | EA Games | ★★★★½ | 45 |
| Rune: Viking Warlord | Take 2 | ★★½ | 48 |
| Rygar: The Legendary Adventure | Tecmo | ★★★★½ | 64 |
| Salt Lake 2002 | Eidos | ★★½ | 55 |
| Savage Skies | Bam | ★★★ | 56 |
| Scooby-Doo: Night of 100 Frights | THQ | ★★★ | 58 |
| The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian | Universal | ★★ | 62 |
| Seek and Destroy | Conspiracy | ★★★½ | 66 |
| Sega Bass Fishing Duel | Sega | ★★★ | 62 |
| Sega Soccer Slam | Sega Sports | ★★ | 62 |
| Sega Sports Tennis | Sega Sports | ★★★★½ | 60 |
| Shadow Hearts | Midway | ★★★★ | 52 |
| Shadow of Destiny | Konami | ★★★½ | 43 |
| Shadow Man: 2econd Coming | Acclaim | ★★ | 57 |
| Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder | Activision | ★★½ | 52 |
| Shifters | 3DO | ★ | 58 |
| Shinobi | Sega | ★★★½ | 63 |
| Shox | EA Sports Big | ★★★½ | 63 |
| Shrek Super Party | TDK Mediactive | ★★½ | 64 |
| **Silent Hill 2** | **Konami** | ★★★★½ | **50** |
| ⑱ **Silent Hill 3** | **Konami** | ★★★★½ | **71** |

**MORE SHIRT SWITCHING**

Other Ziff Davis mags also got special *Silent Hill 3* shirts in the game. Enter these codes for these other fine publications:

| | |
|---|---|
| **EGM** | EGMpretaporter |
| **GMR** | GMRownzjoo |

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Silent Line: Armored Core | Agetec | ★★★½ | 70 |
| Silent Scope | Konami | ★★★ | 39 |
| Silent Scope 2 | Konami | ★★★½ | 49 |
| Silent Scope 3 | Konami | ★★★½ | 62 |
| Silpheed: The Lost Planet | Working Designs | ★★★½ | 40 |
| ⑧ **The Simpsons Hit & Run** | **Vivendi Universal** | ★★★★ | **72** |

Did you know that there's a secret car in every level? Our personal favorite is in level 2. Go to the monorail station and make your way to the top. Hop in the front car, and you can then drive the broken monorail. Sing the monorail song while you're at it.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Simpsons: Road Rage** | **EA Games** | ★★★ | **52** |
| The Simpsons Skateboarding | EA Games | ★½ | 64 |
| The Sims | EA Games | ★★★★ | 65 |

## REPLAY FORUM

**SILENT HILL 3**

Yes, it succeeds in being scary, but near the end, Vincent and Claudia were making the game more and more silly. I also, have a question: Were you able to unlock the fairy in the sewer water? I keep trying but it won't work.

*July Hizon*
*ballisticrecreation@yahoo.com*

We think you mean the fairy that helps you unlock a secret weapon. Unequip the steel pipe and you'll have the option to throw it into the water.

**SOCOM VOICES IN MY HEAD**

I just got *SOCOM* as a Greatest Hits (cheaper, and will last me until I can get enough money to get *SOCOM II*), and I heard that there are secret commands you give only through the headset. What do I gotta say for these cool treats?

*Mike Bahn*
*Los Angeles, CA*

Hey Mike, here are some of the secret phrases you can say to get things done right in *SOCOM*:

"Bravo defuse bomb:" Say this after planting your crosshairs on a bomb, and, well, bravo, the bomb is defused.

"Bravo open door:" Say this after pointing your crosshairs at a door and it'll get unlocked in a jiffy.

"Team low profile:" Say this and your team gets all ninja-like and starts stealthily capping fools left and right.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sky Gunner | Atlus | ★★★½ | 58 |
| Sky Odyssey | Activision | ★★★ | 40 |
| Sled Storm | EA Big | ★★★½ | 55 |
| **Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **62** |
| Smash Cars | Metro3D | ★★★½ | 71 |
| Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament | Namco | ★★★½ | 56 |
| **Smuggler's Run** | **Rockstar** | ★★★★½ | **39** |
| Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory | Rockstar | ★★★★½ | 52 |
| Soccer America: International Cup | Hot-B | ★★ | 48 |
| Soccer Mania | EA/Lego | ★★★½ | 59 |
| ⑨ **SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **60** |

**UNLOCK LEVEL SELECT** Beat the game on the Lieutenant Junior Grade rank to unlock the Level Select option.

**UNLOCK THE MULTIPLE GRENADE LAUNCHER** To unlock the MGL (Multiple Grenade Launcher), just beat the game three times.

**USE TERRORIST WEAPONS** Beat the game with an Ensign rank.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Soldier of Fortune | Majesco | ★★★ | 52 |
| ③ **Soul Calibur II** | **Namco** | ★★★★★ | **72** |

**PLAY AS LIZARDMAN** Finish subchapter 2 in Weapon Master mode. Then you can be a freaky lizard man!

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Soul Reaver 2 | Eidos | ★★★ | 52 |
| Space Race | Infogrames | ★★½ | 59 |
| Speed Kings | Acclaim | ★★★★ | 70 |
| Spider-Man | Activision | ★★★★½ | 57 |
| Splashdown | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 52 |
| **Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild** | **THQ** | ★★★★★ | **72** |
| Splinter Cell | Sony CEA | ★★★★½ | 68 |
| Spy Hunter | Midway | ★★★★½ | 50 |
| Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly | Vivendi Universal | ★★★ | 64 |
| **SSX** | **EA Sports Big** | ★★★★★ | **38** |
| **SSX Tricky** | **EA Sports Big** | ★★★★★ | **52** |
| **SSX 3** | **EA Sports Big** | ★★★★★ | **74** |
| Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force | Majesco | ★★½ | 53 |
| Star Wars Bounty Hunter | LucasArts | ★★★ | 64 |
| Star Wars The Clone Wars | LucasArts | ★★★ | 65 |
| Star Wars Super Bombad Racing | LucasArts | ★★ | 45 |
| Star Wars Jedi Starfighter | LucasArts | ★★★½ | 56 |
| Star Wars Racer Revenge | LucasArts | ★★★★½ | 55 |
| **Star Wars Starfighter** | **LucasArts** | ★★★★½ | **43** |
| Starsky & Hutch | Gotham Games | ★★ | 74 |
| State of Emergency | Rockstar | ★★★ | 55 |
| Stitch: Experiment 626 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 59 |
| Street Fighter EX 3 | Capcom | ★★★½ | 39 |
| Street Hoops | Activision | ★★★½ | 60 |
| Stretch Panic | Conspiracy | ★★★½ | 47 |
| Stuntman | Infogrames/Atari | ★★★ | 59 |
| Sub Rebellion | Metro 3D | ★★★★ | 62 |
| Suikoden III | Konami | ★★★ | 63 |
| Summer Heat Beach Volleyball | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 72 |
| Summoner | THQ | ★★★ | 39 |
| Summoner 2 | THQ | ★★★½ | 62 |
| Sunny Garcia Surfing | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 51 |
| Super Bust-A-Move | Acclaim | ★★★ | 41 |
| Super Bust-A-Move 2 | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 63 |
| Supercar Street Challenge | Activision | ★★½ | 52 |
| Superman: Shadow of Apokolips | Atari | ★★★½ | 63 |
| Surfing H30 | Rockstar | ★★ | 40 |
| SWAT: Global Strike Team | Sierra | ★★★ | 74 |
| Swing Away Golf | EA Games | ★★★ | 38 |
| Tarzan: Untamed | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 52 |
| Taz: Wanted | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 60 |
| ⑲ **Tekken 4** | **Namco** | ★★★½ | **61** |

**UNLOCK ALL CHARACTERS** Finish the game in Story/Battle mode the following number of times to unlock these characters.

**1** Jin Kazama
**2** Violet
**3** Nina
**4** Lei
**5** Bryan
**6** Julia
**7** Kuma
**8** Heihachi
**9** Combot

**Other characters**

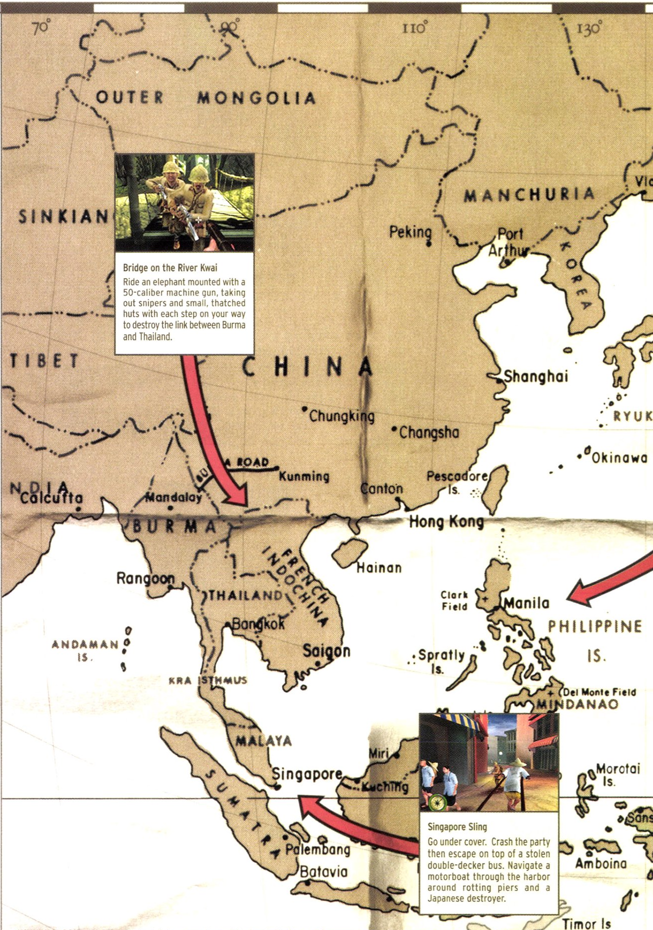
**EDDY** After completing Arcade/Story Battle with Christie, select Christie and press ○.

**LEE** After completing Arcade/Story Battle with Violet, select Violet and press ○.

**PANDA** After completing Arcade/Story Battle with Kuma, select Kuma and press ○.

Coming Soon

MEDAL OF HONOR INFILTRATOR


70°
90°
110°
130°
OUTER MONGOLIA
SINKIANG
MANCHURIA
Vla
Peking
Port Arthur
KOREA
TIBET
CHINA
Shanghai
Chungking
Changsha
RYUK
Okinawa
BURMA ROAD
Kunming
INDIA
Calcutta
Mandalay
Canton
Pescadore Is.
Hong Kong
BURMA
FRENCH INDOCHINA
Hainan
Rangoon
THAILAND
Clark Field
Manila
PHILIPPINE IS.
Bangkok
ANDAMAN IS.
Saigon
Spratly Is.
KRA ISTHMUS
Del Monte Field
MINDANAO
MALAYA
Miri
Singapore
Kuching
Morotai Is.
SUMATRA
Palembang
Batavia
Amboina
Sans
Timor Is
Darw

**Bridge on the River Kwai**

Ride an elephant mounted with a 50-caliber machine gun, taking out snipers and small, thatched huts with each step on your way to destroy the link between Burma and Thailand.

**Singapore Sling**

Go under cover. Crash the party then escape on top of a stolen double-decker bus. Navigate a motorboat through the harbor around rotting piers and a Japanese destroyer.

PlayStation®2

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Violence

***INTERNET CONNECTIVITY required.** Online game play available for the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system only. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately).

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Don't have a cow, man!

**www.snpp.com**
For all your Simpsons needs.

# THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

## Animated gags

*We know that you Simpsons freaks will want to find everything you can. To help you get closer to that 100-percent complete mark, here's a listing of all the animated gags in the game. We've divided the gags up by level and location so you'll know the number of gags in each place.*

### LEVEL 1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Simpson's backyard** | Homer's barbecue, tiki head, swing set |
| **Flander's backyard** | Bomb shelter |
| **Playground by Simpsons home** | Swing set |
| **Kwik E Mart** | Squishee machine, silent alarm, larry the looter, jasper, ATM |
| **School** | Fire extinguisher, fire alarm |
| **Power plan parking lot** | Vent, gas station |
| **Power plant** | Homer's control room |

### LEVEL 2

| | |
|---|---|
| **Moe's Tavern** | Pickle jar, Flamin' Moe, love tester, slot machine |
| **Construction site** | Cement truck |
| **Herman's backyard** | Bomb gag |
| **Town square** | Catapult |
| **Legitimate Business Club Roof** | Rat milker |
| **Near Krusty Burger by Escalator To Nowhere** | Dumpster |
| **Try-n-Save (outside)** | Exploding car |
| **DMV** | Moleman's picture |

### LEVEL 3

| | |
|---|---|
| **Android's Dungeon** | Radioactive man, Clank clank robot |
| **Noiseland arcade** | Dumpster |
| **Kamp Krusty** | Kamp Krusty Flag, pig head |
| **Wally Weasel's** | Kid's ball room |
| **Observatory** | Telescope, matter transporter, silent alarm, perpetual motion machine |
| **Pier** | Crane |

### LEVEL 4

Same gags as in Level 1, but also:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bart's room (accessible from backyard)** | Krusty light |

### LEVEL 5

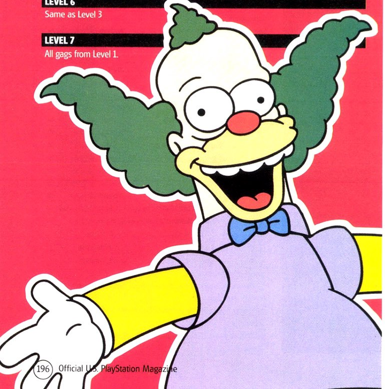
Same as most of the gags in Level 2, specifically: Moe's Tavern, the DMV, and near the Krusty Burger, by the Escalator to Nowhere.

### LEVEL 6

Same as Level 3

### LEVEL 7

All gags from Level 1.



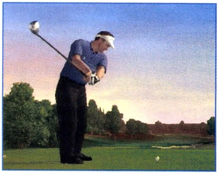
| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|

**MIHARU** After completing Arcade/Story Battle with Xiaoyu, select Xiaoyu and press ○.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Tekken Tag Tournament** | **Namco** | ★★★★½ | **39** |
| Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven | Activision | ★★★ | 67 |
| The Terminator: Dawn of Fate | Atari | ★★½ | 63 |
| Test Drive | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 58 |
| Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open | Infogrames | ★★★ | 48 |
| Tetris Worlds | THQ | ★★ | 57 |
| Theme Park Roller Coaster | EA Games | ★★★★ | 41 |
| The Thing | Universal | ★★★ | 62 |
| Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix | Eidos | ★½ | 52 |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 44 |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 55 |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 63 |
| ❷ **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **73** |

Golf away with some codes! Enter these codes for various surprises:

| | |
|---|---|
| **THEKITCHENSINK** | All courses and golfers |
| **ALLTHETRACKS** | All courses |
| **CANYOUPICKONE** | All golfers |



| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Time Crisis 2 | Namco | ★★★★ | 49 |
| Time Crisis 3 | Namco | ★★★★½ | 74 |
| **TimeSplitters** | **Eidos** | ★★★★★ | **39** |
| **TimeSplitters 2** | **Eidos** | ★★★★★ | **63** |
| Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero | Crave | ★★½ | 45 |
| Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 65 |
| Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness | Eidos | ★★ | 72 |
| **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3** | **Activision** | ★★★★★ | **51** |
| **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4** | **Activision** | ★★★★★ | **63** |
| Top Angler | Xicat | ★★★½ | 57 |
| Top Gear Dare Devil | Kemco | ★★★½ | 41 |
| Top Gun: Combat Zones | Titus | ★★★ | 50 |
| Total Immersion Racing | Empire | ★ | 66 |
| Transworld Surf | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 57 |
| Tribes: Aerial Assault | Sierra | ★★★½ | 62 |
| Triple Play 2002 | EA Sports | ★★ | 55 |
| Triple Play Baseball | EA Sports | ★★ | 45 |
| Tsugunai: Atonement | Atlus | ★★★ | 53 |
| Turok: Evolution | Acclaim | ★½ | 62 |
| **Twisted Metal: Black** | **SCEA** | ★★★★★ | **47** |
| Twisted Metal: Black Online | SCEA | ★★★★ | 61 |
| Ty the Tasmanian Tiger | EA Games | ★★★ | 62 |
| UFC Throwdown | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 58 |
| Unison | Tecmo | ★★★½ | 44 |
| Unlimited Saga | Square Enix | ★★ | 70 |
| Unreal Tournament | Infogrames | ★★½ | 40 |
| V-Rally 3 | Infogrames | ★★★★½ | 64 |
| Vampire Night | Namco | ★★½ | 52 |
| Vexx | Acclaim | ★★ | 67 |
| Victorious Boxers | Empire | ★★★½ | 51 |
| ⑰ **Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution** | **Sega** | ★★★★★ | **72** |

**PLAY AS DURAL**

Reach the Sega Area Uptown stage in Quest mode and purchase Dural from the shop. Then, highlight the top-left blank corner space of the character-selection screen in Versus mode to choose Dural.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution** | **Sega** | ★★★★★ | **72** |
| Wakeboarding Unleashed | Activision | ★★★★½ | 70 |
| Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo | Bam | ★★★ | 74 |
| War Jetz | 3DO | ★★½ | 48 |
| **War of the Monsters** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **64** |
| Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior | THQ | ★★½ | 74 |
| Warriors of Might & Magic | 3DO | ★★½ | 44 |
| Wave Rally | Eidos | ★½ | 53 |
| Way of the Samurai | Bam | ★★★½ | 59 |
| Whirl Tour | Vivendi Universal | ★★ | 63 |
| Whiteout | Konami | ★ | 65 |
| Wild Arms 3 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 62 |
| Wild Wild Racing | Interplay | ★★★ | 39 |
| Winback | Koei | ★★★★ | 43 |
| Wipeout Fusion | Bam | ★★★★½ | 57 |
| Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land | Atlus | ★★★ | 53 |
| Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park | Dreamcatcher | ★★★ | 57 |
| World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks | 3DO | ★★★ | 42 |
| World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 55 |
| World Series Baseball 2K3 | Sega Sports | ★★★★ | 67 |
| **World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l** | **Konami** | ★★★★★ | **67** |
| World Tour Soccer 2002 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 53 |
| World Tour Soccer 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 65 |
| **WRC: World Rally Championship** | **Bam** | ★★★★★ | **57** |
| Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions | Activision | ★★ | 63 |
| WTA Tour Tennis | Konami | ★ | 57 |
| WWE Crush Hour | THQ | ★★½ | 68 |
| WWE SmackDown!: Shut Your Mouth | THQ | ★★½ | 64 |
| **WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It** | **THQ** | ★★★½ | **52** |
| X-Men: Next Dimension | Activision | ★★★★½ | 64 |
| X Squad | EA Games | ★★★½ | 38 |
| X2: Wolverine's Revenge | Activision | ★★★ | 69 |
| Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht | Namco | ★★★★ | 66 |
| XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association | Acclaim | ★★★★½ | 74 |
| Yanya Caballista: City Skater | Koei | ★★★½ | 49 |
| Yu-Gi-Oh!: The Duelists of the Roses | Konami | ★★½ | 67 |
| Zapper | Infogrames | ★★½ | 64 |
| Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders | Konami | ★★★★½ | 44 |
| Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner | Konami | ★★★★½ | 68 |

# PS1 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 007 Racing | EA Games | ★★★ | 41 |
| 3Xtreme | 989 Studios | ★ | 21 |
| 40 Winks | GT Interactive | ★★★★ | 28 |
| 102 Dalmatians: Puppies to the Rescue | Eidos | ★★★½ | 41 |
| 2002 FIFA World Cup | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 58 |
| **A Bug's Life** | **Sony CEA** | ★★ | **15** |
| **Ace Combat 2** | **Namco** | ★★★★★ | **1** |
| Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere | Namco | ★★★ | 31 |
| Aces of the Air | Agetec | ½ | 64 |
| Action Bass | Take 2 | ★★ | 37 |
| Action Man: Operation Extreme | Hasbro | ★★★ | 41 |
| Air Hockey | Mud Duck | ★★★½ | 70 |
| Akuji the Heartless | Crystal Dynamics | ★★★ | 18 |
| Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge | Sony CEA | ★★ | 45 |
| Alexi Lalas International Soccer | Rockstar | ★ | 23 |
| Alien Resurrection | Fox Interactive | ★★★ | 38 |
| All-Star Racing 2 | Mud Duck | ★★★ | 71 |
| All-Star Slammin' D-ball | Agetec | ★★½ | 56 |
| Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 47 |
| Alundra | Working Designs | ★★★★½ | 4 |
| Alundra 2 | Activision | ★★★ | 32 |
| The Amazing Virtual Sea-Monkeys | Conspiracy | ★½ | 66 |
| American Pool | Mud Duck | ★ | 71 |
| Animaniacs Ten Pin Alley | ASC | ★★★ | 17 |
| Animorphs: Shattered Reality | Infogrames | ★★½ | 37 |
| **Ape Escape** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **22** |
| Apocalypse | Activision | ★★★ | 16 |
| Arc the Lad Collection | Working Designs | ★★★★ | 52 |
| Arcade Party Pak | Midway | ★★★½ | 28 |
| Arcade's Greatest Hits: Atari Collection 2 | Midway | ★★½ | 7 |
| Arcade's Greatest Hits: Midway Collection 2 | Midway | ★★ | 4 |
| Armored Core | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 3 |
| Armored Core: Master of Arena | Agetec | ★★½ | 31 |
| Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M. | Acclaim | ½ | 35 |
| **Army Men 3D** | **3DO** | ★★★ | **20** |
| Army Men: Air Attack | 3DO | ★★★★ | 27 |

**1881** The year in which Giuseppe Esposito, the first Sicilian Mafia member to emigrate to the United States, was arrested.

**LA COSA NOSTRA** Literally translates to "This Thing Of Ours," and is the FBI's official name for the Mafia.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Army Men: Air Attack 2 | 3DO | ★★★½ | 39 |
| Army Men: Green Rogue | 3DO | ★½ | 47 |
| Army Men: Sarge's Heroes | 3DO | ★★ | 32 |
| Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2 | 3DO | ★★½ | 40 |
| Army Men: World War | 3DO | ★½ | 34 |
| Army Men: World War - Final Front | 3DO | ★½ | 45 |
| Army Men: World War - Land, Sea, Air | 3DO | ★½ | 39 |
| Arthur! Ready to Race | The Learning Co. | ★ | 42 |
| Assault | Midway | ★★★ | 15 |
| **Asteroids** | **Activision** | ★★★½ | **16** |
| Atari Anniversary Edition Redux | Infogrames | ★★ | 53 |
| Atlantis: The Lost Empire | SCEA | ★★★★ | 48 |
| ATV: Quad Power Racing | Acclaim | ★ | 39 |
| ATV Mania | Gotham Games | ★★★★ | 73 |
| Austin Powers Pinball | Gotham Games | ★★ | 64 |
| Auto Destruct | Electronic Arts | ★★★ | 6 |
| Azure Dreams | Konami | ★★★ | 10 |
| Backstreet Billiards | Ascii | ★★★½ | 15 |
| Ball Breakers | Take 2 | ★★★½ | 36 |
| Ballistic | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 27 |
| Baseball 2000 | Interplay | ★★ | 21 |
| Bass Landing | Agetec | ★★★½ | 26 |
| Bass Rise | Bandai | ★★★ | 28 |
| Batman & Robin | Acclaim | ★ | 13 |
| Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker | Ubi Soft | ½ | 39 |
| Batman: Gotham City Racer | Ubi Soft | ★½ | 46 |
| Battle Hunter | Agetec | ★½ | 48 |
| Battletanx: Global Assault | 3DO | ★½ | 31 |
| Beast Wars | Hasbro | ★½ | 5 |
| ❸ **Beyblade** | **Crave** | ★½ | **66** |

As if you really want that blade to keep spinning...here's a trick to prolong this agonizing game. Hit ○+△ (instead of ✕) when you launch your blade. Whee!

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Big Air | Accolade | ★½ | 20 |
| Big Bass Fishing | Take 2 | ½ | 58 |
| Big League Slugger Baseball | Agetec | ★½ | 74 |
| Big Ol' Bass 2 | Konami | ★★½ | 45 |
| Big Strike Bowling | Gotham Games | ★★★½ | 68 |
| Billiards | Agetec | ★★½ | 45 |
| Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. | Midway | ★★ | 10 |
| Black Bass with Blue Marlin | Hot-B | ★★ | 29 |
| Blade | Activision | ★★½ | 41 |
| Blast Lacrosse | Acclaim | ★★½ | 48 |
| Blast Radius | Psygnosis | ★★★½ | 19 |
| Blaster Master: Blasting Again | Crave | ★★★ | 38 |
| Blasto | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 8 |
| Blockids | Natsume | ★★½ | 69 |
| Bloody Roar | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 6 |
| Bloody Roar 2 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 21 |
| Blues Big Musical | THQ | ★★★ | 46 |
| Board Game: Top Shop | Agetec | ★★★★ | 45 |
| Bomberman Fantasy Race | Atlus | ★★½ | 19 |
| Bomberman Party Edition | Vatical | ★★½ | 38 |
| Bomberman World | Atlus | ★★½ | 13 |
| The Bombing Islands | Kemco | ★★½ | 47 |
| Boombots | SouthPeak | ★★½ | 27 |
| Bottom of the 9th '97 | Konami | ★★★½ | 1 |
| Bowling | Agetec | ★★ | 43 |
| Boxing | Agetec | ★★★ | 45 |
| Bratz | Ubi Soft | n/a | n/a |
| Brave Fencer Musashi | Square EA | ★★★★ | 15 |
| Bravo Air Race | THQ | ★★★ | 1 |
| Breakout | Hasbro | ★★ | 39 |
| Breath of Fire III | Capcom | ★★★½ | 9 |
| Breath of Fire IV | Capcom | ★★★½ | 40 |
| Brigandine | Atlus | ★★★½ | 15 |
| Broken Sword | THQ | ★★★★ | 5 |
| Broken Sword II | Crave | ★★★½ | 27 |
| Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling | THQ | ★★★½ | 13 |
| Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling 2 | THQ | ★★★★ | 31 |
| Bug Riders | GT Interactive | ★★ | 3 |
| Bugs Bunny & Taz: Time Busters | Infogrames | ★★★ | 41 |

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 23 |
| Builder's Block | Jaleco | ★★★½ | 35 |
| Burstrick Wake Boarding!! | Natsume | ★½ | 45 |
| Bushido Blade 2 | Square EA | ★★★½ | 14 |
| Bust A Groove | 989 Studios | ★★★★ | 16 |
| Bust A Groove 2 | Enix | ★★★ | 36 |
| Bust-A-Move 4 | Natsume | ★★★★ | 17 |
| Bust-A-Move 99 | Acclaim | ★★ | 19 |
| Buzz Lightyear of Star Command | Activision | ★★½ | 39 |
| C: The Contra Adventure | Konami | ★½ | 12 |
| c-12: Final Resistance | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 58 |
| Caesar's Palace 2000 | Interplay | ½ | 41 |
| Caesar's Palace II | Interplay | ★★ | 15 |
| Capcom vs. SNK Pro | Capcom | ★★★½ | 60 |
| Card Games | Agetec | ★½ | 50 |
| Cardinal SYN | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 9 |
| CART World Series | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 3 |
| Casper: Friends Around the World | Sound Source | ★½ | 41 |
| Castlevania Chronicles | Konami | ★★★½ | 50 |
| **Castlevania: Symphony of the Night** | **Konami** | ★★★★★ | **2** |
| Castrol Honda Superbike | Electronic Arts | ★★ | 21 |
| Centipede | Hasbro | ★ | 22 |
| Championship Bass | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 33 |
| Championship Motocross 2001 Feat. Ricky Carmichael | THQ | ★★★ | 41 |
| Championship Motocross Feat. Ricky Carmichael | THQ | ★★★½ | 25 |
| Championship Surfer | Mattel | ★★★ | 41 |
| Chessmaster II | Mindscape | ★★★½ | 23 |
| Chicken Run | Eidos | ★★★ | 41 |
| Chocobo Racing | Square EA | ★★★ | 23 |
| Chocobo's Dungeon 2 | Square EA | ★★½ | 29 |
| **Chrono Cross** | **Square EA** | ★★★★★ | **36** |
| Circuit Breakers | Mindscape | ★★★ | 12 |
| Civilization II | Activision | ★★★★½ | 18 |
| Cleopatra's Fortune | Mud Duck | ★★½ | 71 |
| Clock Tower | Ascii | ★★★ | 2 |
| Clock Tower II: The Struggle Within | Agetec | ★★½ | 28 |
| **Colin McRae 2.0** | **Codemasters** | ★★★★★ | **40** |
| Colin McRae Rally | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 30 |
| **Colony Wars** | **Psygnosis** | ★★★★★ | **4** |
| Colony Wars: Red Sun | Psygnosis | ★★★★½ | 31 |
| Colony Wars: Vengeance | Psygnosis | ★★★½ | 14 |
| Command & Conquer: Red Alert | Virgin | ★★★½ | 4 |
| Contender | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 17 |
| Contender 2 | Bam | ★ | 41 |
| **Cool Boarders 2** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★ | **3** |
| **Cool Boarders 3** | **989 Studios** | ★★★ | **14** |
| **Cool Boarders 4** | **989 Studios** | ★★★ | **27** |
| Cool Boarders 2001 | Sony CEA | ★ | 39 |
| Countdown Vampires | Bandai | ★½ | 32 |
| Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn | Activision | ★★½ | 34 |
| **Crash Bandicoot 2** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★ | **3** |
| **Crash Bandicoot: WARPED** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **15** |
| Crash Bash | SCEA/Universal | ★★½ | 39 |
| Crime Killer | Interplay | ★★★ | 12 |
| Critical Depth | GT Interactive | ★★★ | 3 |
| **Croc** | **Fox Interactive** | ★★★★ | **1** |
| Croc 2 | Fox Interactive | ★★½ | 22 |
| Crossroad Crisis | Agetec | ★½ | 50 |
| Crusaders of Might & Magic | 3DO | ★★★ | 30 |
| **CTR: Crash Team Racing** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **26** |
| CyberTiger | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 27 |
| Dance Dance Revolution | Konami | ★★★★ | 42 |
| Dance Dance Revolution: Disney Mix | Konami | ★★★★ | 49 |
| Dance Dance Revolution: Konamix | Konami | ★★★★ | 57 |
| Danger Girl | THQ | ★★½ | 39 |
| Dark Omen | Electronic Arts | ★★ | 9 |
| DarkStalkers 3 | Capcom | ★★★★ | 16 |
| Darkstone | Take 2 | ★★★½ | 43 |
| Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 38 |
| Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix | Acclaim | ★★½ | 47 |
| David Beckham Soccer | Majesco | ★★★ | 61 |
| Dead in the Water | ASC | ★★½ | 17 |
| Dead or Alive | Tecmo | ★★★★½ | 8 |
| Deathtrap Dungeon | Eidos | ★★½ | 9 |

## REPLAY FORUM

**CHEAT 'N' RUN!**

Yo! I just bought *The Simpsons: Hit & Run* on your recommendation, and I need some cheats. Can you hook a girl up?

*Sarita Church*
*Eugene, OR*

Here ya go!

No top speed (you can just keep going faster and faster): □□□□

Invincible car: △✕△✕

Trippy mode: △○△○

**HITMAN 2**

Say word, Team *OPM*. I thought your readers could use some codes for *Hitman 2*. If you haven't bought it yet, go get it right now!

Slow-motion mode: R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, L2

Full healing: R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, Down

All weapons: R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, Square, X

Level skip: R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, Circle, X, Circle, X

Bomb mode: R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, L1

Nailgun mode (this is awesome, it sticks people to the walls!): R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L1, L1

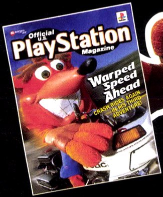
Level select (do this at the main menu): R2, L2, Up, Down, Square, Triangle, Circle

*Terry Winn*
*villageidiot@drunkenbastards.com*

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deception III: Dark Delusion | Tecmo | ★★★★ | 31 |
| Delta Force: Urban Warfare | Novalogic | ★★★ | 61 |
| Demolition Racer | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 26 |
| Destrega | Koei | ★★★★ | 16 |
| Destruction Derby Raw | Midway | ★★★★ | 39 |
| Devil Dice | THQ | ★★★½ | 13 |
| Dexter's Laboratory: Mandark's Lab? | Bam | ★★★½ | 59 |
| Diablo | Electronic Arts | ★★★★ | 8 |
| Die Hard Trilogy: Viva Las Vegas | Fox Interactive | ★★ | 31 |
| Digimon Digital Card Battle | Bandai | ★★★ | 48 |
| Digimon Rumble Arena | Bandai | ★★★½ | 55 |
| Digimon World | Bandai | ★½ | 36 |
| Digimon World 2 | Bandai | ★★ | 46 |
| Digimon World 3 | Bandai | ★★½ | 57 |
| Dino Crisis | Capcom | ★★★★ | 25 |
| Dino Crisis 2 | Capcom | ★★★★½ | 38 |
| Dirt Jockey | Mastiff | ★★ | 71 |
| Disney's Dinosaur | Ubi Soft | ★½ | 36 |
| Disney's Treasure Planet | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 64 |
| Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers | Ubi Soft | ★★★ | 39 |
| Downhill Mountain Bike Racing | Activision | ★★½ | 27 |
| Dracula: The Last Sanctuary | DreamCatcher | ★★½ | 56 |
| Dracula: The Resurrection | DreamCatcher | ★★½ | 48 |
| Dragon Ball GT | Bandai | ★★ | 4 |
| Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22 | Infogrames | ★ | 69 |
| Dragon Tales: Dragon Seek | NewKidCo | ★½ | 45 |
| Dragon Valor | Namco | ★★★ | 38 |
| Dragon Warrior VII | Enix | ★★★★½ | 51 |
| Dragonseeds | Jaleco | ★★ | 15 |
| **Driver** | **GT Interactive** | ★★★★ | **24** |
| Driver 2 | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 40 |
| Ducati World Championship Racing | Acclaim | ★★½ | 41 |
| Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes | Infogrames | ★★½ | 40 |
| **Duke Nukem: Time to Kill** | **GT Interactive** | ★★★½ | **14** |
| Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown | GT Interactive | ★★★ | 5 |
| **Dukes of Hazzard** | **SouthPeak** | ★½ | **29** |
| Dukes of Hazzard II: Daisy Dukes it Out | SouthPeak | ★★ | 41 |
| Dune 2000 | Electronic Arts | ★½ | 27 |
| EA Sports Supercross | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 41 |
| Eagle One: Harrier Attack | Infogrames | ★★★ | 32 |
| Echo Night | Agetec | ★★★ | 23 |
| ECW Anarchy Rulz | Acclaim | ★ | 38 |
| ECW Hardcore Revolution | Acclaim | ★½ | 30 |
| Ehrgeiz | Square EA | ★★★½ | 21 |
| Einhänder | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 8 |
| Elemental Gearbolt | Working Designs | ★★★★ | 11 |
| Eliminator | Psygnosis | ★½ | 20 |
| The Emperor's New Groove | SCEA | ★★★½ | 40 |
| Equestrian Showcase | Mud Duck | ★★ | 71 |
| ESPN MLS GameNight | Konami | ★★★ | 40 |
| E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial: Interplanetary Mission | NewKidCo | ½ | 54 |
| Eternal Eyes | Crave | ★½ | 38 |
| Evil Dead: Hail to the King | THQ | ★★½ | 41 |
| Evil Zone | Titus | ★★★ | 25 |
| Expendable | Infogrames | ★½ | 34 |
| F1 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 33 |
| F1 Championship Season | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 40 |
| F1 Racing Championship | Ubi Soft | ★★½ | 39 |
| Family Feud | Hasbro | ★★★ | 39 |
| Family Game Pack | 3DO | ★★½ | 33 |
| Fantastic Four | Acclaim | ★★ | 3 |
| Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition | SNK | ★½ | 30 |
| Fear Effect | Eidos | ★★★★½ | 31 |
| Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix | Eidos | ★★★★½ | 43 |
| Felony 11-79 | Ascii | ★★★ | 1 |
| FIFA 98 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 4 |
| FIFA 99 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 17 |
| FIFA 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 27 |
| FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 39 |
| FIFA Soccer 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 63 |
| The Fifth Element | Activision | ½ | 15 |
| Fighter Maker | Agetec | ★★★½ | 21 |
| **Fighting Force** | **Eidos** | ★★★ | **3** |
| Fighting Force 2 | Eidos | ★★ | 29 |

# REWIND

## OPM, December 1998


Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Warped Speed Ahead
Crash rides again in his third adventure!

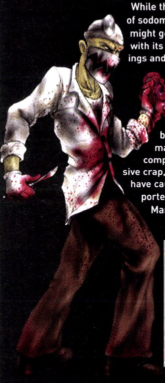
*Five years is a long time in the gaming business. Some things remain relatively the same (such as the enduring platformer), while other aspects of the industry change as the years go by. We perused the December 1998 issue to see what was big news and what were the best and worst games at that given moment.*

### BEST GAME OF THE MONTH

*Crash Bandicoot: WARPED* earned itself a full five discs, with the proclamation, "If you can't find something you like in this game...you're dead." Great visuals, wide variety of gameplay, and challenging for newbies and veterans, *Crash 3* is a great throwback platformer to boot up whenever you get too pissed off at *Jak II*.

### KILLING THE THRILL

It was back in December when we reported that the "bloodiest game ever" was canned. With the clever headline "Thrill Kill, Dead," we reported on how EA felt that the market wasn't ready for its graphical content, even after being edited down from an AO (Adults Only) rating to an M (Mature). However, anyone who's played a, shall we say, "underground" build realized that the game itself was incredibly crappy.



While the gruesome executions and acts of sodomy were too much for 1998, they might get released nowadays. *Manhunt*, with its graphic depictions of eye gougings and beatdowns, is quite comparable gorewise to *Thrill Kill*—OK, the onscreen sodomy still might not fly, even today. But it's interesting to hear that overly graphic content could cause a backlash in both ratings and the market, and possibly cause game companies to publish bland, unoffensive crap, something that *Thrill Kill* could have caused. We'll have to see if the purported *Thrill Kill* effect occurs after Manhunt is released.

BELLADONNA
DR. FAUSTUS
OGRE

A not-so-thrilling kill

### EARTH, WATER, FIRE, AIR, AND CRAP (WORST GAME)

THE FIFTH ELEMENT
PlayStation
ACTIVISION

Not only is *The Fifth Element* one of the lowest-rated games ever, it's also the very first game to receive a half-disc rating (old-school stars). Combine poor controls, horrendous graphics, and a terrible camera, and you have something that wasn't worth any money back then, but it's probably so cheap now it's worth getting just to check out just how awful it is.

### PSP GRANDDADDY

The biggest announcement at Tokyo Game Show '98? What could be considered a precursor to the PSP, Sony announced the PocketStation, a wee little thing that basically served as the template for the Sega Dreamcast's VMU (Visual Memory Unit). The PocketStation sported six buttons, a 32x32 black-and-white screen, a 15-block memory card, and infrared signals for multiplayer (even back then, Sony was thinking of ways to obtain wireless connectivity). Just as Sony is positioning PSP as more than just a gaming device, the PocketStation featured non-gaming components such as an alarm clock and calendar to serve as a useful tool for students and workers. Games announced back then were versions of *Crash Bandicoot: WARPED*, *Street Fighter Zero 3*, and even *Final Fantasy VIII*.

### OTHER GREAT GAMES THAT CAPPED OFF 1998

Go hunt for a copy of *Brave Fencer Musashi*. It got four out of five discs back then, and it's a great little action-based distraction from Square. Boasting "platform-style jumping sequences and all sorts of different minigames" in addition to "puzzles and traps" that are "well-integrated within the game's story," its only flaws are a too-linear quest and controls that could use a slight tweak. Otherwise, it's a good find on eBay.

Another good find is *Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus*. After adding a much-needed "quiksave," Abe's puzzle-filled journey becomes significantly more playable. Sure, some of the actiony-platform elements might be jarring for those expecting hardcore puzzles, but the game's admitted oddity, and the puzzle design, merits sifting through the bargain bins and eBay listings.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Final Fantasy Anthology | Square EA | ●●●●◐ | 26 |
| Final Fantasy Chronicles | Square EA | ●●●● | 47 |
| ❺ **Final Fantasy Origins** | **Square Enix** | ●●●◐ | **67** |

**Wanna build up your hit points real quick in *Final Fantasy II*?** Wander around outside a town, get into random battles with easy enemies, then attack your own characters. The more HP you lose, the greater chance you'll be given an HP boost in return.

**DO AND UNDO** Another common *FF2* trick is to perform an action, then cancel it during a battle. That makes leveling up weapon skills and magic spells incredibly easy. For example, if you want to raise your weapon level, select Fight, select a target, then cancel immediately afterwards. Do this over and over again. Magic is done in a similar manner. Select Magic, then the spell, then the target; then cancel it right after. The number of times you'll have to do this depends on the monsters being fought, but it could be anywhere from 50 to 100 times per level. Note that once you obtain 100 skill points for your current spell/weapon level, you can no longer gain any more in that battle. Also, changing the cursor settings to "Memory" might make it easier to level up magic this way.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ❶ **Final Fantasy Tactics** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●● | **5** |

**UNLOCK CLOUD STRIFE** Wait until you're almost at the end of chapter four (or at least until after you battle Zodiac Demon Adramelk in Igros Castle). Give the Cancer Stone to Goug, and Cloud will join your reality, but run off. Then make your way back to Zirghidas Trade City. You'll soon rescue Cloud from some thieves, and you should then go to Bervenia Volcano to retrieve his Materia Blade.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Final Fantasy VII** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **1** |
| **Final Fantasy VIII** | **Square EA** | ●●●●● | **25** |
| **Final Fantasy IX** | **Square EA** | ●●●●● | **39** |
| Fisherman's Bait | Konami | ●●●◐ | 18 |
| Fisherman's Bait 2: Big Ol' Bass | Konami | ●●● | 27 |
| Flintstones Bedrock Bowling | SouthPeak | ● | 37 |
| Ford Racing | Empire | ●●◐ | 44 |
| **Formula 1 '98** | **Psygnosis** | ●●●● | **15** |
| Formula 1 '99 | Psygnosis | ●●●◐ | 28 |
| Forsaken | Acclaim | ●●●● | 10 |
| Fox Sports Golf '99 | Fox Interactive | ●● | 11 |
| Fox Sports Soccer '99 | Fox Interactive | ●●◐ | 11 |
| Freestyle Boardin' '99 | Capcom | ●●◐ | 18 |
| Freestyle Motocross: McGrath vs. Pastrana | Acclaim | ●●◐ | 40 |
| **Frogger** | **Hasbro** | ●●◐ | **4** |
| Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge | Hasbro | ●●● | 38 |
| Front Mission 3 | Square EA | ●●●●◐ | 31 |
| Future Cop L.A.P.D. | Electronic Arts | ●●● | 13 |
| G-Police | Psygnosis | ●●●●◐ | 3 |
| G-Police 2 | Psygnosis | ●●●● | 25 |
| G-Darius | THQ | ●●●● | 13 |
| Galaga: Destination Earth | Hasbro | ●●◐ | 39 |
| Galerians | Crave | ●●● | 33 |
| Gallop Racer | Tecmo | ●●◐ | 28 |
| Gauntlet Legends | Midway | ●●◐ | 32 |
| Gekido | Interplay | ●●● | 34 |
| Gekioh: Shooting King | Natsume | ●●●◐ | 67 |
| Gex: Deep Cover Gecko | Eidos | ●●●◐ | 20 |
| Gex: Enter the Gecko | Midway | ●●●◐ | 7 |
| Ghost in the Shell | THQ | ●●●● | 4 |
| Glover | Hasbro | ●● | 28 |
| Gold and Glory: The Road to El Dorado | Sony CEA | ●● | 42 |
| **Gran Turismo** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **9** |
| **Gran Turismo 2** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **29** |
| **Grand Theft Auto** | **Take 2** | ●●◐ | **10** |
| Grand Theft Auto 2 | Rockstar | ●●● | 27 |
| Grand Theft Auto: London 1969 | Rockstar | ●●◐ | 22 |
| Grand Tour Racing '98 | Activision | ●●● | 1 |
| Grandia | Sony CEA | ●●●●◐ | 26 |
| Granstream Saga | THQ | ●●● | 10 |
| The Grinch | Konami/Universal | ●◐ | 39 |
| Grind Session | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 34 |
| Grudge Warriors | Take 2 | ●● | 34 |
| Guardian's Crusade | Activision | ●●● | 19 |
| Gubble | Mud Duck | ◐ | 68 |
| Gundam Battle Assault 2 | Bandai | ●●●● | 62 |
| Gunfighter: The Legend of Jesse James | Ubi Soft | ●●◐ | 52 |
| HardBall '99 | Accolade | ●◐ | 15 |

# 8-3-9

What "yakuza" literally means. It's from the Japanese version of blackjack, and refers to the yakuza's lack of worth for society.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone | EA Games | ★★★ | 53 |
| Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets | EA Games | ★★★ | 64 |
| Harvest Moon: Back to Nature | Natsume | ★★★½ | 40 |
| HBO Boxing | Acclaim | ★★ | 41 |
| Heart of Darkness | Interplay | ★★★★ | 13 |
| Hellboy: Asylum Seeker | Dreamcatcher | ½ | 73 |
| Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy | NewKidCo | ★★½ | 20 |
| Herc's Adventures | LucasArts | ★★★ | 2 |
| High Heat Baseball 2000 | 3DO | ★ | 22 |
| High Heat Major League Baseball 2002 | 3DO | ★★★★ | 43 |
| Hogs of War | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 38 |
| Hooters Road Trip | Ubi Soft | ½ | 55 |
| Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth | Atlus | ★★½ | 53 |
| Hot Shots Golf | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 7 |
| Hot Shots Golf 2 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 30 |
| **Hot Wheels Turbo Racing** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★½ | **25** |
| Hydro Thunder | Midway | ★★ | 31 |
| IHRA Drag Racing | Bethesda | ½ | 53 |
| In Cold Blood | DreamCatcher | ★★ | 49 |
| Incredible Crisis | Titus | ★★★½ | 38 |
| Inspector Gadget: Gadget's Crazy Maze | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 50 |
| Intelligent Qube | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 2 |
| Intellivision Classic Games | Activision | ★½ | 28 |
| Int'l. Superstar Soccer 98 | Konami | ★★★★½ | 11 |
| Int'l. Track & Field 2000 | Konami | ★★★★ | 27 |
| ❷ **InuYasha** | **Bandai** | ★★★ | **68** |

**UNLOCK ALL CHARACTERS** (except Totosai)

↑, →, ↓, ←, ↑, →, ↓, ←

**UNLOCK TOTOSAI**

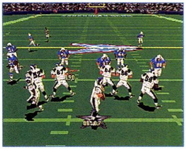
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, ←, →, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →

**UNLOCK DEMON INUYASHA**

↑, ↑, L1, L1, ↓, ↓, R1, R1

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Invasion From Beyond | GT Interactive | ★★ | 19 |
| Iron Soldier 3 | Vatical | ★★★★ | 35 |
| Irritating Stick | Jaleco | ★★★ | 18 |
| ISS Pro Evolution | Konami | ★★★★½ | 35 |
| **The Italian Job** | **Rockstar** | ★★★★★ | **57** |
| Jackie Chan Stuntmaster | Midway | ★★★½ | 30 |
| Jade Cocoon | Crave | ★★★½ | 23 |
| Jarrett & LaBonte Stock Car Racing | Codemasters | ★★★★ | 38 |
| Jeopardy! | Hasbro | ★★★★ | 17 |
| Jeopardy! 2 | Hasbro | ★★★★ | 29 |
| **Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000** | **Acclaim** | ★½ | **38** |
| Jersey Devil | Sony CEA | ★★ | 10 |
| **Jet Moto 2** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★½ | **3** |
| Jet Moto 3 | 989 Studios | ★★★½ | 26 |
| Jigsaw Madness | XS Games | ★★ | 70 |
| Jimmy Johnson VR Football | Interplay | ★★ | 2 |
| Jojo's Bizarre Adventure | Capcom | ★★★★½ | 31 |
| Juggernaut | Jaleco | ★★ | 26 |
| K-1 Grand Prix | Jaleco | ★★★½ | 28 |
| K-1 Revenge | Jaleco | ★★½ | 18 |
| Kagero: Deception II | Tecmo | ★★★★½ | 14 |
| Kartia | Atlus | ★★★★ | 12 |
| Kensei Sacred Fist | Konami | ★½ | 17 |
| Kickboxing | Agetec | ★ | 58 |
| Killer Loop | Crave | ★★★ | 27 |
| King of Fighters 99 | Agetec | ★★★★ | 41 |
| KISS Pinball | Take 2 | ★½ | 46 |
| **Klonoa** | **Namco** | ★★★★★ | **6** |
| Knockout Kings | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 16 |
| Knockout Kings 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 27 |
| Knockout Kings 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 39 |
| Konami Arcade Classics | Konami | ★★½ | 23 |
| Koudelka | Infogrames | ★★★ | 35 |
| Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed | Midway | ★★★ | 34 |
| The Land Before Time: Great Valley Racing | TDK Mediactive | ★★★ | 46 |
| The Land Before Time: Return to Great Valley | Sound Source | ★★½ | 39 |
| Largo Winch .//Commando Sar | Ubi Soft | ½ | 57 |
| **Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver** | **Eidos** | ★★★★½ | **25** |
| The Legend of Dragoon | Sony CEA | ★★★★½ | 34 |
| Legend of Legaia | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 19 |
| Legend of Mana | Square EA | ★★½ | 35 |
| Lego Island 2: The Brickster's Revenge | Lego Media | ★★½ | 46 |

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lego Rock Raiders | Lego Media | ★ | 37 |
| Lilo & Stitch | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 59 |
| The Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure | Activision | ★½ | 42 |
| The Little Mermaid II | THQ | ★★★★ | 39 |
| Lode Runner | Natsume | ★★½ | 4 |
| Looney Tunes Racing | Infogrames | ★★½ | 39 |
| Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider | Infogrames | ★★½ | 51 |
| **The Lost World: Jurassic Park** | **Electronic Arts** | ★ | **2** |
| Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete | Working Designs | ★★★★½ | 22 |
| Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete | Working Designs | ★★★★ | 40 |
| **Madden NFL 98** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★ | **2** |
| Madden NFL 99 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 13 |
| **Madden NFL 2000** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **25** |
| **Madden NFL 2001** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★★ | **37** |
| Madden NFL 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 49 |
| Madden NFL 2003 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 62 |
| ❹ **Madden NFL 2004** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★ | **74** |



**Wanna get some cool player cards?** Here's a short list of cards and how to earn them:

| PLAYER CARD | GET GOLD IN THE ALL-MADDEN |
|---|---|
| 029 **Simeon Rice** | Trench Fight Drill |
| 030 **Warren Sapp** | Swat Ball Drill |
| 033 **Marcell Shipp** | Coffin Corner Drill |
| 044 **Priest Holmes** | Ground Attack Drill |
| 049 **Peyton Manning** | All-Madden Pocket Presence Drill |
| 071 **Jeff Garcia** | Precision Passing Drill |
| 106 **Tom Brady** | All-Madden Clutch Kicking Drill |
| 123 **Ray Lewis** | Chase and Tackle Drill |

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marble Master | Conspiracy | ★★½ | 69 |
| Martian Gothic: Unification | Take 2 | ★★★½ | 52 |
| Marvel Super Heroes | Capcom | ★★ | 2 |
| Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter | Capcom | ★★★½ | 18 |
| Marvel vs. Capcom EX | Capcom | ★★½ | 30 |
| Mary-Kate and Ashley: Magical Mystery Mall | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 40 |
| Mary-Kate and Ashley: Winner's Circle | Acclaim | ★★½ | 45 |
| Mass Destruction | ASC | ★★½ | 3 |
| Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX | Activision | ★★★★ | 45 |
| Maximum Force | Midway | ★½ | 2 |
| MDK | Playmates | ★★½ | 3 |
| **Medal Of Honor** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★★★ | **27** |
| Medal Of Honor Underground | Electronic Arts | ★★★★ | 39 |
| MediEvil | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 14 |
| MediEvil II | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 32 |
| Mega Man Legends | Capcom | ★★★★ | 12 |
| Mega Man Legends 2 | Capcom | ★★★½ | 39 |
| Mega Man X4 | Capcom | ★★★ | 4 |
| Mega Man X5 | Capcom | ★★★½ | 41 |
| Mega Man X6 | Capcom | ★★★ | 53 |
| Men in Black–The Series: Crashdown | Infogrames | ★★★ | 54 |
| **Metal Gear Solid** | **Konami** | ★★★★★ | **14** |
| Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions | Konami | ★★★★ | 25 |
| Metal Slug X | Agetec | ★★★★ | 43 |
| **Micro Machines** | **Midway** | ★★★★★ | **5** |
| Micro Maniacs | Codemasters | ★★★★ | 32 |
| Mike Tyson Boxing | Codemasters | ★★ | 39 |
| Miracle Space Race | Mud Duck | ★ | 71 |
| The Misadventures of Tron Bonne | Capcom | ★★★★ | 31 |
| Miss Spider's Tea Party | Simon & Schuster | ★★★ | 41 |
| Missile Command | Hasbro | ★★★ | 28 |
| Mission: Impossible | Infogrames | ★★ | 28 |
| MK Mythologies | Midway | ★★½ | 3 |
| MLB 98 | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 1 |

## REPLAY FORUM

**KILLING THE KENJI:**

Hey wassup, my name is Grant, and I have a question about *Grand Theft Auto 3*. You know when you're working for Kenji and that other guy [*ed note*: probably Donald Love], and he tells you to kill Kenji? Does not doing Kenji's missions before you kill him affect the overall ending of the game? Because I'm done with the game, but it says I'm only 80 percent complete and have only 62 out of 73 missions complete. Please write back.

*Grant*
*whiterappa_x@hotmail.com*

While doing Kenji's missions before you kill him doesn't affect the overall ending, it will affect your final percentage completion. So yes, finish Kenji's missions first, and then kill him to boost your score. There are probably other missions that you need to find, since Kenji only has five.

**PAYNE-FUL CODES:**

If anyone out there is gonna buy *Max Payne* because it's a greatest hit, here are some codes. Peace out.

Total invulnerability (Be careful, it's not always on. I keep forgetting to re-enter it, so sometimes I still die. D'oh): L1, L1, L2, L2, R1, R1, R2, R2.

All weapons, full ammo, and eight painkillers: L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle, Circle, X, Square.

*Sam Lake*
*Springfield, NY*

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| MLB 99 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 9 |
| MLB 2000 | 989 Studios | ★★★★ | 21 |
| MLB 2001 | 989 Studios | ★★★ | 33 |
| MLB 2002 | Sony CEA | ★★ | 46 |
| MLB 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 60 |
| MLB 2004 | Sony CEA | ★★★★½ | 70 |
| MLB Bottom of the 9th 99 | Konami | ★★★½ | 12 |
| Mobil 1: Rally Championship | Electronic Arts | ★★★ | 32 |
| Mobile Armor | Agetec | ★ | 70 |
| Mobile Light Force | XS Games | ★★★½ | 69 |
| Monaco Grand Prix | Ubi Soft | ★★★½ | 21 |
| Monkey Hero | Take 2 | ★★ | 18 |
| Monkey Magic | Sunsoft | ★ | 29 |
| **Monopoly** | **Hasbro** | ★★★ | **5** |
| Monster Bass! | XS Games | ★★ | 70 |
| Monster Rancher 2 | Tecmo | ★★★★ | 26 |
| Monster Rancher Battle Card: Episode II | Tecmo | ★★★½ | 36 |
| Monster Rancher Hop-A-Bout | Tecmo | ★★★½ | 41 |
| Monster Seed | Sunsoft | ★★½ | 20 |
| Monsters, Inc. | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 51 |
| Mort the Chicken | Crave | ★½ | 41 |
| Mortal Kombat: Special Forces | Midway | ★½ | 36 |
| **Mortal Kombat 4** | **Midway** | ★★★½ | **11** |
| Mortal Kombat Trilogy | Midway | n/a | n/a |
| **Moto Racer** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★★★★ | **3** |
| Moto Racer 2 | Electronic Arts | ★★★★½ | 14 |
| Moto Racer World Tour | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 40 |
| Motocross Mania | Take 2 | ★ | 48 |
| Motocross Mania 2 | Gotham Games | ★★½ | 72 |
| Motorhead | Fox Interactive | ★★★½ | 14 |
| Mr. Domino | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 15 |
| Mr. Driller | Namco | ★★★★ | 33 |
| Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness | Namco | ★★★★ | 38 |
| MTV Music Generator | Codemasters | ★★★★ | 28 |
| MTV Sports: Pure Ride | THQ | ★★★½ | 39 |
| MTV Sports: Skateboarding Feat. Andy MacDonald | THQ | ★ | 39 |
| MTV Sports: Snowboarding | THQ | ★★★½ | 27 |
| MTV Sports: T.J. Lavin's Ultimate BMX | THQ | ★★ | 45 |
| The Mummy | Konami | ★★★ | 41 |
| Muppet Monster Adventure | Midway | ★★★★ | 39 |
| Muppet Race Mania | Midway | ★★★½ | 39 |
| My Disney Kitchen | Bam | n/a | n/a |
| N.GEN Racing | Infogrames | ★★½ | 35 |
| N20 | Fox Interactive | ★★ | 11 |
| Nagano Winter Olympics 98 | Konami | ★★ | 6 |
| Namco Museum Vol. 3 | Namco | n/a | n/a |
| **NASCAR 98** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★ | **3** |
| **NASCAR 99** | **EA Sports** | ★★★★ | **14** |
| NASCAR 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 26 |
| NASCAR 2001 | EA Sports | ★★½ | 38 |
| NASCAR Heat | Hasbro | ★★★½ | 40 |
| NASCAR Rumble | Electronic Arts | ★★★½ | 31 |
| NASCAR Thunder 2002 | EA Sports | ★★ | 52 |
| NASCAR Thunder 2004 | EA Sports | ★½ | 74 |
| NBA Fastbreak 98 | Midway | ★★½ | 4 |
| NBA Hoopz | Midway | ★★★ | 43 |
| NBA In the Zone 98 | Konami | ★★½ | 7 |
| NBA In the Zone 99 | Konami | ★★★½ | 19 |
| NBA In the Zone 2000 | Konami | ★★½ | 28 |
| NBA Live 98 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 3 |
| NBA Live 99 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 16 |
| NBA Live 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 28 |
| NBA Live 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 39 |
| NBA Live 2002 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 53 |
| NBA ShootOut 98 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 8 |
| NBA ShootOut 2000 | 989 Studios | ★★★ | 30 |
| NBA ShootOut 2001 | 989 Studios | ★★½ | 39 |
| NBA ShootOut 2002 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 50 |
| NBA ShootOut 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 63 |
| NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC | Midway | ★★★ | 28 |
| NBA Tonight | ESPN Digital | ★★★ | 14 |
| NCAA Final Four 99 | 989 Studios | ★★★½ | 18 |
| NCAA Final Four 2000 | 989 Studios | ★★★½ | 28 |
| NCAA Final Four 2001 | Sony CEA | ★★ | 40 |

# REPLAY

You tell us about the games now.

**GRANDMASTER**
Gary Gygax first published *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1974.

## REPLAY FORUM

**BGDA LEVELING**
Hey *OPM*, I bought *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* so I can level up my characters in preparation for *BG: DA2*. Anyhow, do you know of any cool cheats to make me a supercool guy who can beat up Drizz Do'Urden?

*Dave Grayvis*
*Sacramento, CA*

**Well, you want to make an ultimate character, so here's the ultimate cheat: Hold down L1+R3+← (on your D-pad) +△. While doing that, press R3 (down on the right analog). Boom, your character advances to level 20 and you'll get all level-one feats, plus 75,000 in gold.**

**JAK AND SECRETS:**
Based on your review, I wasn't really sure if I wanted to buy *Jak II*, so I went with the safe bet of getting *Jak and Daxter* first. I finished it once already, and I heard that there is a secret ending to the game. How do I get it? Do I have to do something really crazy, like finish the game in three hours or something? Is the secret ending worth whatever I have to do?

*Jay Hawkins*
*Reno, NV*

**Of course it's worth it! Secret endings are worth the trouble, no matter what. While it's true that some normal game endings stink, the secret ending is always fun enough to be worth it. Anyway, you just need to collect at least 100 power cells to see it. Good luck!**

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NCAA Football 98 | EA Sports | ★★ | 2 |
| NCAA Football 99 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 12 |
| NCAA Football 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 25 |
| NCAA Football 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 36 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 98 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 4 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 99 | 989 Studios | ★★★★ | 15 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 2000 | 989 Studios | ★★★ | 25 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 2001 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 37 |
| NCAA March Madness 98 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 7 |
| NCAA March Madness 99 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 18 |
| NCAA March Madness 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 29 |
| NCAA March Madness 2001 | EA Sports | ★★ | 41 |
| Nectaris: Military Madness | Jaleco | ★★★★ | 17 |
| **Need for Speed III** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★★★ | **8** |
| **Need for Speed: High Stakes** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★★★½ | **20** |
| Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed | Electronic Arts | ★★★½ | 33 |
| Need for Speed: V-Rally | Electronic Arts | ★½ | 3 |
| Need for Speed: V-Rally 2 | Electronic Arts | ★★★½ | 28 |
| Newman/Haas Racing | Psygnosis | ★★ | 7 |
| The Next Tetris | Hasbro | ★★★ | 24 |
| **NFL Blitz** | **Midway** | ★★★★★ | **13** |
| **NFL Blitz 2000** | **Midway** | ★★★★★ | **24** |
| NFL Blitz 2001 | Midway | ★★★½ | 38 |
| **NFL GameDay 98** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **1** |
| NFL GameDay 99 | 989 Studios | ★★★★ | 13 |
| NFL GameDay 2000 | 989 Studios | ★★★★ | 25 |
| NFL GameDay 2001 | 989 Studios | ★★½ | 37 |
| NFL GameDay 2002 | Sony CEA | ★★ | 49 |
| NFL GameDay 2003 | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 62 |
| NFL GameDay 2004 | Sony CEA | ★★ | 74 |
| NFL Xtreme | 989 Studios | ★★ | 11 |
| NFL Xtreme 2 | 989 Studios | ★½ | 24 |
| NHL 98 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 2 |
| NHL 99 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 15 |
| NHL 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 26 |
| NHL 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 38 |
| NHL Blades of Steel 2000 | Konami | ★★ | 28 |
| NHL Breakaway 98 | Acclaim | ★★★ | 2 |
| NHL Championship 2000 | Fox Interactive | ★★★ | 27 |
| **NHL FaceOff 98** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **2** |
| NHL FaceOff 99 | 989 Studios | ★★★★ | 14 |
| NHL FaceOff 2000 | 989 Studios | ★★★★ | 26 |
| NHL FaceOff 2001 | Sony CEA | ★★★★½ | 38 |
| NHL Rock the Rink | Electronic Arts | ★★★★ | 32 |
| Nick Toons Racing | Infogrames | ★★★ | 48 |
| Nightmare Creatures | Activision | ★★★½ | 3 |
| Nightmare Creatures II | Konami | ★★ | 33 |
| Ninja: Shadow of Darkness | Eidos | ★½ | 15 |
| Nuclear Strike | Electronic Arts | ★★★★½ | 3 |
| O.D.T. | Psygnosis | ★½ | 15 |
| Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus | GT Interactive | ★★★★½ | 15 |
| **Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee** | **GT Interactive** | ★★★★ | **1** |
| Omega Boost | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 25 |
| One | ASC | ★★★★ | 4 |
| One Piece Mansion | Capcom | ★½ | 50 |
| **Pac-Man World** | **Namco** | ★★★★½ | **25** |
| Pandemonium! 2 | Midway | ★★★½ | 3 |
| Panzer Front | Agetec | ★★★½ | 51 |
| **PaRappa the Rapper** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **2** |
| **Parasite Eve** | **Square EA** | ★★★★ | **12** |
| Parasite Eve II | Square EA | ★★★★½ | 37 |
| Patriotic PInball | Gotham Games | ★★½ | 70 |
| Persona 2: Eternal Punishment | Atlus | ★★★★ | 41 |
| Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 41 |
| PGA Tour 98 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 3 |
| Phix: The Adventure | Agetec | ★½ | 74 |
| Pinobee | Konami | ★★ | 68 |
| Pipe Dreams 3D | Empire Int. | ★★ | 52 |
| Pitfall 3D | Activision | ★★ | 9 |
| Planet of the Apes | Ubi Soft | ★★★ | 63 |
| Play With The Teletubbies | Knowledge Adv. | ★★ | 36 |
| Pocket Fighter | Capcom | ★★★★ | 11 |
| Point Blank | Namco | ★★★½ | 6 |
| Point Blank 2 | Namco | ★★★½ | 20 |
| Point Blank 3 | Namco | ★★★½ | 44 |
| Polaris SnoCross | Vatical | ★★½ | 38 |
| Pong | Hasbro | ★★★½ | 27 |
| Pool Hustler | Activision | ★★★★ | 15 |
| Populous: The Beginning | Electronic Arts | ★½ | 21 |
| Porsche Challenge | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 1 |
| Power Play Sports Trivia | Ubi Soft | ★★ | 58 |
| Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue | THQ | ★½ | 40 |
| Power Shovel | Acclaim | ★★★ | 49 |
| Power Soccer 2 | Psygnosis | ★★★ | 5 |
| Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball | Infogrames | ★★½ | 41 |
| The Powerpuff Girls: Chemical X-Traction | Bam | ★½ | 51 |
| Poy Poy | Konami | ★★★ | 3 |
| Pro 18 World Tour Golf | Psygnosis | ★★ | 19 |
| Pro Pinball: Big Race USA | Empire | ★★★½ | 37 |
| Pro Pinball: Fantastic Journey | Empire | ★★★½ | 37 |
| Pro Pinball: Timeshock! | Take 2 | ★ | 10 |
| Psybadek | Psygnosis | ★★ | 15 |
| Punky Skunk | Jaleco | ★★★ | 6 |
| Putter Golf | Agetec | ½ | 53 |
| Puzzle Star Sweep | Agetec | ★★½ | 43 |
| Puzznic | Mud Duck | ★ | 71 |
| Q-Bert | Hasbro | ★★½ | 28 |
| Quake II | Activision | ★★★★ | 27 |
| R-Type Delta | Agetec | ★★★★½ | 23 |
| R-Types | Ascii | ★★★½ | 17 |
| R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 | Namco | ★★★★ | 20 |
| Racing | Agetec | ½ | 43 |
| Rage Ball | Agetec | ★½ | 68 |
| Railroad Tycoon II | Take 2 | ★★★ | 30 |
| Rainbow Six | Red Storm | ★ | 27 |
| Rally Cross 2 | 989 Studios | ★★★½ | 15 |
| Rampage | Midway | ★★½ | 4 |
| Rampage 2: Universal Tour | Midway | ★ | 21 |
| Rampage Through Time | Midway | ★½ | 36 |
| Ray Tracers | THQ | ★★★ | 5 |
| RayCrisis | Working Designs | ★★★ | 38 |
| Rayman 2: The Great Escape | Ubi Soft | ★★★★ | 35 |
| Rayman Brain Games | Ubi Soft | ★★★ | 50 |
| Rayman Rush | Ubi Soft | ★★★ | 57 |
| Razor Freestyle Scooter | Crave | ★★★ | 41 |
| RC de GO! | Acclaim | ★★★★ | 40 |
| RC Helicopter | Agetec | ★½ | 68 |
| RC Revenge | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 37 |
| RC Stunt Copter | Titus | ★★★★ | 25 |
| Re-Volt | Acclaim | ★★ | 26 |
| **Ready 2 Rumble** | **Midway** | ★★★½ | **27** |
| Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2 | Midway | ★★★ | 40 |
| Red Asphalt | Interplay | ★½ | 3 |
| **Reel Fishing** | **Natsume** | ★★★ | **3** |
| Reel Fishing II | Natsume | ★★ | 34 |
| **Resident Evil: Director's Cut** | **Capcom** | ★★★ | **2** |
| **Resident Evil 2** | **Capcom** | ★★★★★ | **6** |
| **Resident Evil 2: Dual Shock** | **Capcom** | ★★★★★ | **13** |
| Resident Evil 3: Nemesis | Capcom | ★★★★½ | 27 |
| Resident Evil: Survivor | Capcom | ★½ | 38 |
| Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure | Atlus | ★★★ | 35 |
| Rising Zan | Agetec | ★★★★ | 24 |
| Risk | Hasbro | ★★★★ | 11 |
| Rival Schools | Capcom | ★★★★ | 14 |
| **Riven: The Sequel to Myst** | **Acclaim** | ★★★★★ | **6** |
| **Road Rash 3D** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★★ | **11** |
| Road Rash: Jail Break | Electronic Arts | ★★ | 30 |
| Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots | Mattel | ★★★ | 41 |
| Rocket Power: Team Rocket Rescue | THQ | ★½ | 51 |
| Rogue Trip | GT Interactive | ★★★½ | 14 |
| Roll Away | Psygnosis | ★★★★½ | 13 |
| Rollcage | Psygnosis | ★★★½ | 19 |
| Rollcage Stage II | Psygnosis | ★★★½ | 31 |
| Romance of the Three Kingdoms VI | Koei | ★★ | 30 |
| Roswell Conspiracies: Aliens, Myths, & Legends | Red Storm | ★ | 48 |
| RPG Maker | Agetec | ★★★★½ | 35 |
| Rugrats: Totally Angelica | THQ | ★★★½ | 48 |
| Rugrats in Paris: The Movie | THQ | ★★★ | 41 |
| Runabout 2 | Hot-B | ★ | 36 |
| Running Wild | 989 Studios | ★★ | 14 |
| Rushdown | Electronic Arts | ★★ | 19 |
| Sabrina, Teenage Witch: A Twitch in Time! | Knowledge Adv. | ½ | 45 |
| SaGa Frontier | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 8 |
| SaGa Frontier 2 | Square EA | ★★★½ | 29 |
| Saiyuki: Journey West | Koei | ★★★½ | 47 |
| Saltwater Sportfishing | Agetec | ★★½ | 52 |
| Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001 | 3DO | ★★ | 32 |
| Sammy Sosa Softball Slam | 3DO | ★★ | 33 |
| Samurai Shodown: Warrior's Rage | SNK | ★½ | 36 |
| Scooby-Doo and the Cyber Chase | THQ | ★★ | 52 |
| Scrabble | Hasbro | ★★½ | 28 |
| Sentinel Returns | Psygnosis | ★★ | 11 |
| Sesame Street Sports | NewKidCo | ★★★½ | 54 |
| Shadow Madness | Crave | ★★½ | 19 |
| Shadow Man | Acclaim | ★½ | 27 |
| Shadow Master | Psygnosis | ★★★★ | 5 |
| Shadow Tower | Agetec | ½ | 28 |
| Shanghai: True Valor | Sunsoft | ★★★ | 20 |
| Sheep | Empire | ★★★ | 41 |
| Shrek: Treasure Hunt | TDK Mediactive | n/a | n/a |
| Shipwreckers | Psygnosis | ★★★ | 3 |
| Shooter: Space Shot | Agetec | ★★★½ | 48 |
| Shooter: Starfighter Sanvein | Agetec | ★★ | 43 |
| Silent Bomber | Bandai | ★★★★ | 30 |
| **Silent Hill** | **Konami** | ★★★★ | **18** |
| Silhouette Mirage | Working Designs | ★★★½ | 29 |
| Sim Theme Park | Electronic Arts | ★★½ | 33 |
| The Simpsons Wrestling | Taito | ★★ | 45 |
| **Skullmonkeys** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★★★★ | **6** |
| Skydiving Extreme | Banpresto | ★½ | 49 |
| **Sled Storm** | **Electronic Arts** | ★★★★ | **24** |
| Slots | Activision | ★★ | 72 |
| Small Soldiers | Electronic Arts | ★½ | 15 |
| Smurfs | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 29 |
| Smurf Racer | Infogrames | ★★ | 45 |
| Sno-Cross Championship Racing | Crave | ★½ | 37 |
| Snowboarding | Agetec | ★★ | 43 |
| Sol Divide | XS Games | ★★★ | 68 |
| Sorcerer's Maze | XS Games | ★★★½ | 68 |
| Soul of the Samurai | Konami | ★½ | 24 |
| South Park | Acclaim | ★½ | 27 |
| South Park: Chef's Luv Shack | Acclaim | ★ | 28 |
| South Park Rally | Acclaim | ★½ | 29 |
| Space Invaders | Activision | ★★★ | 27 |
| Spawn: The Eternal | Sony CEA | ★★ | 4 |
| Spec Ops: Covert Assault | Take 2 | ★ | 52 |
| Spec Ops: Ranger Elite | Take 2 | ★ | 46 |
| Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol | Take 2 | ★ | 34 |
| Speed Punks | Sony CEA | ★★★★½ | 32 |
| Speed Racer | Jaleco | ★★ | 8 |
| Speedball 2100 | Empire | ★★½ | 40 |
| **Spider-Man** | **Activision** | ★★★★★ | **37** |
| Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro | Activision | ★★★½ | 50 |
| Spin Jam | Take 2 | ★½ | 38 |
| SpongeBob SquarePants | THQ | ★★ | 51 |
| Sports Car GT | Electronic Arts | ★★½ | 21 |
| **Spyro the Dragon** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★ | **13** |
| **Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage!** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★½ | **27** |
| **Spyro 3: Year of the Dragon** | **Sony CEA** | ★★★★★ | **39** |
| Star Ocean: The 2nd Story | Sony CEA | ★★★★½ | 22 |
| Star Trek: Invasion | Activision | ★★★★½ | 37 |
| Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles | LucasArts | ★★½ | 33 |
| **Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace** | **LucasArts** | ★★★ | **25** |
| Star Wars Masters of Teräs Käsi | LucasArts | ★★★ | 4 |
| Star Wars Demolition | LucasArts | ★★★½ | 41 |
| Steel Reign | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 2 |
| Streak | GT Interactive | ★★½ | 15 |
| **Street Fighter Alpha 3** | **Capcom** | ★★★★★ | **21** |
| Street Fighter Collection | Capcom | ★★★ | 4 |
| Street Fighter Collection 2 | Capcom | ★★★ | 16 |
| Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha | Capcom | ★★★★ | 2 |
| Street Fighter EX2 Plus | Capcom | ★★★ | 33 |

★★★★★ The original rating for *VF4*, still considered the best fighting game ever.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Street Racquetball | Agetec | ½ | 68 |
| Street Sk8er | Electronic Arts | ★★½ | 19 |
| Street Sk8er 2 | Electronic Arts | ★★★ | 32 |
| Strider 2 | Capcom | ★★★½ | 34 |
| Striker Pro 2000 | Infogrames | ★★★★ | 33 |
| Strikers 1945 | Agetec | ★★½ | 44 |
| Stuart Little 2 | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 60 |
| Suikoden II | Konami | ★★★★ | 26 |
| Super Bubble Pop | Jaleco | ★ | 68 |
| Super Shot Soccer | Tecmo | ★★★½ | 61 |
| Superbike 2000 | EA Sports | ★½ | 32 |
| SuperCross 2000 | EA Sports | ★½ | 29 |
| SuperCross Circuit | 989 Studios | ★★★½ | 28 |
| Superstar Dance Club #1 Hits!!! | XS Games | ★★½ | 67 |
| Surf Riders | Ubi Soft | ★½ | 35 |
| Sydney 2000 | Eidos | ★★ | 38 |
| **Syphon Filter** | **989 Studios** | **★★★★** | **18** |
| Syphon Filter 2 | 989 Studios | ★★★½ | 31 |
| Syphon Filter 3 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 52 |
| T'ai Fu | Activision | ★½ | 19 |
| T.R.A.G. | Sunsoft | ★★★ | 20 |
| Tactics Ogre | Atlus | ★★★½ | 12 |
| Tail Concerto | Atlus | ★★★½ | 26 |
| Tales of Destiny | Namco | ★★★★ | 13 |
| Tales of Destiny II | Namco | ★★★½ | 49 |
| **Tarzan** | **Sony CEA** | **★★★½** | **24** |
| Team Buddies | Midway | ★★★½ | 38 |
| Team LOSI RC Racing | Fox Interactive | ★★½ | 13 |
| **Tekken 3** | **Namco** | **★★★★★** | **9** |
| **Tenchu** | **Activision** | **★★★★** | **14** |
| Tenchu 2: Birth of the Stealth Assassins | Activision | ★★★ | 37 |
| Tennis | Agetec | ★★ | 53 |
| Tennis Arena | Ubi Soft | ★★½ | 4 |
| **Test Drive 4** | **Accolade** | **★★★½** | **3** |
| **Test Drive 5** | **Accolade** | **★★★½** | **15** |
| Test Drive 6 | Infogrames | ★★★½ | 27 |
| Test Drive: Le Mans | Infogrames | ★★½ | 34 |
| Test Drive: Off-Road 3 | Infogrames | ★★ | 26 |
| Thousand Arms | Atlus | ★★★★ | 26 |
| Thrasher: Skate & Destroy | Rockstar | ★★★½ | 29 |
| Threads of Fate | Square EA | ★★★½ | 35 |
| Thunder Force V | Working Designs | ★★★ | 13 |
| Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf | EA Sports | ★★★★ | 16 |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001 | EA Sports | ★★★½ | 41 |
| Tigger's Honey Hunt | NewKidCo | ★★★★ | 41 |
| Time Crisis: Project Titan | Namco | ★★★ | 45 |
| Tiny Tank | Sony CEA | ★★ | 25 |
| Tiny Toon Adventures: Plucky's Big Adventure | Conspiracy | ★½ | 50 |
| Tiny Toons: The Great Beanstalk | NewKidCo | ★★★★ | 18 |
| TOCA 2 | Activision | ★★★★½ | 27 |
| Tom & Jerry in House Trap | Eidos | ★★★ | 41 |
| Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear | Red Storm | ★★½ | 45 |
| **Tomb Raider II** | **Eidos** | **★★★★½** | **4** |
| **Tomb Raider III** | **Eidos** | **★★★½** | **16** |
| Tomb Raider: Chronicles | Eidos | ★★½ | 41 |
| Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation | Eidos | ★★★★ | 29 |
| Tomba! | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 11 |
| Tomba! 2: The Evil Swine Return | Sony CEA | ★★★★ | 29 |
| **Tomorrow Never Dies** | **Electronic Arts** | **★★★½** | **28** |
| Tonka Space Station | Hasbro | ★★½ | 41 |
| **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater** | **Activision** | **★★★★½** | **26** |
| **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2** | **Activision** | **★★★★★** | **38** |
| Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 | Activision | ★★★★½ | 51 |
| Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 | Activision | ★★★★ | 64 |
| Toonenstein: Dare to Scare | Vatical | ★★½ | 29 |
| Torneko: The Last Hope | Enix | ★★ | 40 |
| Toy Story 2 | Activision | ★★★ | 28 |
| Toy Story Racer | Activision | ★★★ | 44 |
| Transformers: Beast Wars Transmetals | Bam | ★ | 36 |
| Trap Gunner | Atlus | ★★½ | 13 |
| Treasures of the Deep | Namco | ★★★★ | 1 |
| Trickin' Snowboarder | Capcom | ★½ | 25 |
| Triple Play '99 | EA Sports | ★★½ | 9 |
| Triple Play 2000 | EA Sports | ★★★★½ | 20 |
| **Triple Play 2001** | **EA Sports** | **★★★★★** | **32** |
| Triple Play Baseball | EA Sports | ★★½ | 44 |
| Turbo Prop Racing | Sony CEA | ★★★ | 11 |
| Turnabout | Natsume | ★★★★ | 69 |
| **Twisted Metal III** | **989 Studios** | **★★½** | **16** |
| **Twisted Metal 4** | **989 Studios** | **★★★★** | **28** |
| Twisted Metal: Small Brawl | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 52 |
| Tyco RC: Assault With a Battery | Mattel | ★★ | 38 |
| Ultimate 8-Ball | THQ | ★★★★ | 22 |
| Ultimate Fighting Championship | Crave | ★★½ | 40 |
| UmJammer Lammy | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 24 |
| The Unholy War | Eidos | ★★★ | 14 |
| Uprising X | 3DO | ★★★ | 17 |
| Urban Chaos | Eidos | ★★ | 33 |
| Vagrant Story | Square EA | ★★★½ | 33 |
| Valkyrie Profile | Enix | ★★★★ | 36 |
| Vampire Hunter D | Jaleco | ★★ | 37 |
| Vanark | Jaleco | ★★★ | 32 |
| Vandal Hearts II | Konami | ★★★½ | 27 |
| Vanguard Bandits | Working Designs | ★★½ | 33 |
| Vanishing Point | Acclaim | ★★★½ | 44 |
| Vegas Games 2000 | 3DO | ★★★½ | 27 |
| V.I.P. | Ubi Soft | ★★ | 51 |
| **Vigilante 8** | **Activision** | **★★★★** | **10** |
| Vigilante 8: Second Offense | Activision | ★★★ | 29 |
| Virtual Kasparov | Titus | ★★ | 49 |
| VR Baseball '99 | Interplay | ★★★½ | 11 |
| VR Sports Powerboat Racing | Interplay | ★ | 10 |
| Vs. | THQ | ★ | 3 |
| Walt Disney World Quest Magical Racing Tour | Eidos | ★★½ | 33 |
| Walt Disney's Jungle Book Rhythm n' Groove | Ubi Soft | ★★★ | 41 |
| War Jetz | 3DO | ★★ | 48 |
| WarGames: DefCon 1 | MGM Interactive | ★★★★ | 12 |
| Warpath: Jurassic Park | Electronic Arts | ★★ | 27 |
| Warriors of Might and Magic | 3DO | ★★★ | 41 |
| Warzone 2100 | Eidos | ★★★★ | 22 |
| WCW Backstage Assault | EA Games | ★★ | 40 |
| WCW Mayhem | Electronic Arts | ★★★½ | 26 |
| **WCW Nitro** | **THQ** | **★★½** | **5** |
| WCW/nWo Thunder | THQ | ★ | 17 |
| The Weakest Link | Activision | ★★★½ | 51 |
| **Wheel of Fortune** | **Hasbro** | **★★★★** | **17** |
| Wheel of Fortune 2 | Hasbro | ★★★★ | 39 |
| Winnie the Pooh: Kindergarten | Bam | n/a | n/a |
| Winnie the Pooh: Preschool | Bam | n/a | n/a |
| Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: 2nd Edition | Sony CEA | ★★½ | 35 |
| Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: 3rd Edition | Sony CEA | ★½ | 47 |
| Wild 9 | Interplay | ★★★½ | 15 |
| Wild Arms 2 | Sony CEA | ★★★½ | 33 |
| The Wild Thornberrys: Animal Adventure | Mattel | ★½ | 41 |
| WipeOut 3 | Psygnosis | ★★★★ | 26 |
| Woody Woodpecker Racing | Konami | ★★ | 40 |
| World Cup 98 | EA Sports | ★★★ | 10 |
| World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks | 3DO | ½ | 39 |
| World Is Not Enough | Electronic Arts | ★★★ | 40 |
| World's Scariest Police Chases | Activision | ★★ | 47 |
| Worms Armageddon | Hasbro | ★★★½ | 27 |
| Worms World Party | Ubi Soft | ★★★★ | 55 |
| Wu-Tang Shaolin Style | Activision | ★★★ | 28 |
| WWF Attitude | Acclaim | ★★★★ | 24 |
| **WWF SmackDown!** | **THQ** | **★★★★½** | **31** |
| **WWF SmackDown! 2** | **THQ** | **★★★★★** | **40** |
| **WWF War Zone** | **Acclaim** | **★★★★** | **12** |
| X-Bladez: Inline Skater | Crave | ½ | 55 |
| X-Files | Fox Interactive | ★★★ | 28 |
| X Games Pro Boarder | ESPN Digital | ★★★★ | 14 |
| X-Men: Children of the Atom | Acclaim | ★★ | 6 |
| X-Men: Mutant Academy | Activision | ★★★ | 36 |
| X-Men: Mutant Academy 2 | Activision | ★★★ | 50 |
| Xena: Warrior Princess | Electronic Arts | ★★★½ | 26 |
| Xenogears | Square EA | ★★★★ | 14 |
| You Don't Know Jack! | Berkeley Systems | ★★★★½ | 25 |
| You Don't Know Jack! Mock 2 | Sierra | ★★ | 40 |
| Yu-Gi-Oh!: Forbidden Memories | Konami | ★½ | 57 |

# READER REVIEWS

## Virtual Soul Fighting

***We want your reviews of the best and worst games, so write a review and send it to opm@ziffdavis.com. We can't publish everyone, so keep it short, be witty, and remember that not every game deserves a 5-star rating just because you like it!***

### VF4 VS. SCII

**What you said:** "As a fighting-game fan and enthusiast (and not just of the 3D kind), Christmas came early when sequels to two of the finest brawlers of all time were released in quick succession this summer. While the new *Soul Calibur* bears a "II" indicating a true sequel, in all honesty, it is much like *VF Evo* in that it is more of an update of a previous game. But what an update it is, Namco would have had to mess up pretty bad to screw up the follow-up to what is quite possibly the single greatest fighter of all time. And while *Soul Calibur II* necessarily doesn't reinvent the game, or the genre for that matter, it does everything to near perfection.

Every *SC* fan will more than likely find their favorite character in this edition in some form, with an updated move list building on the fighter's previous style. Beginners will be able to pick up this game and hack away, while masters will fine tune their skills against both human and A.I. opponents (especially in the new Weapons Master mode). There are two problems I have with *SC* though, the first being that the PS2 got a crappier exclusive character than the other versions (If they could license Link for Nintendo, why couldn't we get Dante from *DMC*?). The second being, in all honesty, *SCII* (more than other fighting games) is best played against another human player of your relative skill level, for people who just play against the computer, it might get dull.

I personally think that no fighting-game fan can go wrong with either game, but I personally prefer *VF4*. It's deeper, more strategic, and boasts two new characters and a new Quest mode replacing Kumite, not to mention what is probably the best fighting-game engine of all time (plus its only $20!). I personally see myself playing a lot more *VF4* than *SCII* when I'm by myself, as a dedicated player will have tons to do with the Training mode, Quest mode, Japanese A.I., and experimentation with different characters. It's a tough call to make, as each game is so good in its own right. Both games also make fine use of the Dual Shock 2. Only purists and fighting-game fanatics will need to buy an arcade stick (may I suggest one from X-Arcade?). It's a tough decision to make, largely one of personal preference; try out each one and decide for yourself (or get both!). Whatever your choice, you will not be disappointed."

Your Scores:
VF4: ★★★★★
SCII: ★★★★½

*Vincent Cimino*
*vinman45@aol.com*

**What we said:**
VF4: "All of the things that made us go gaga over the original *VF4* still stand."
SCII: "*Soul Calibur II* is brilliant. It's one of those extremely rare games that screams perfection."
Our Scores:
VF4 ★★★★★
SCII: ★★★★★

**"No fighting-game fan can go wrong with either game."**

22
CHAMPION
CHALLENGER

**Virtua Fighter 4 vs. Soul Calibur II**

**13** How many *more* playable demos the next issue of *OPM* will have than any other PlayStation mag in the United States.

# NEXT MONTH

January 2004
On sale Dec. 9

## 13 PLAYABLE DEMOS! *ONLY* IN THE OFFICIAL MAG!

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Issue 76
SONY
PlayStation 2
DVD
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Don't accept lame imitations

- Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain
- SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs
- Freedom Fighters
- Conflict: Desert Storm II—Back to Baghdad
- Madden NFL 2004
- NCAA Football 2004
- ESPN College Hoops
- Rise to Honor
- R-Type Final
- Whiplash
- Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius
- Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

## THE HUMONGOUS 2004 PREVIEW SPECTACULAR!

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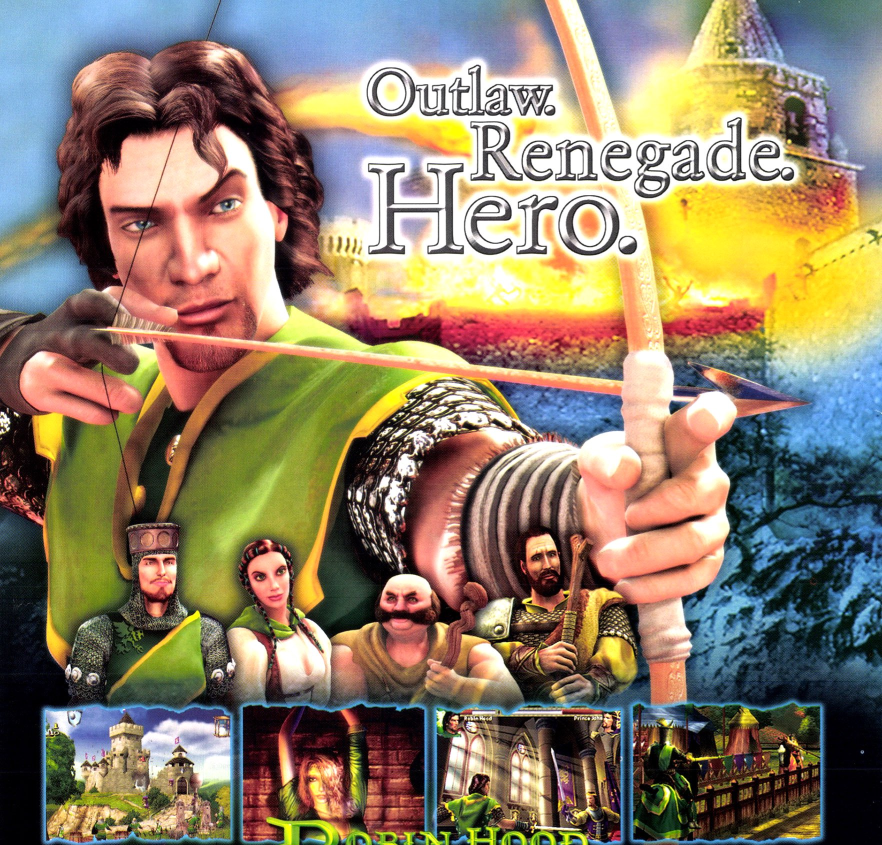

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*From daring archery ambushes to swashbuckling swordfights, from the battlefield to the jousting field, live the legend of Robin Hood. Use every ounce of cunning, strategy and wit to bring the tyranny of Prince John to an end!*

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Suggestive Themes
Violence

PlayStation®2

PC CD ROM

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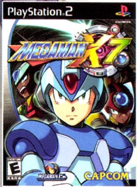
DOUBLE-HERO CHARACTER SELECT FOR STRATEGIC BATTLES

# MEGA MAN X

## EXPLODES ONTO THE PlayStation® 2



Join the Anniversary
**BASH**

MEGAMAN 15th

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Violence

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PlayStation 2

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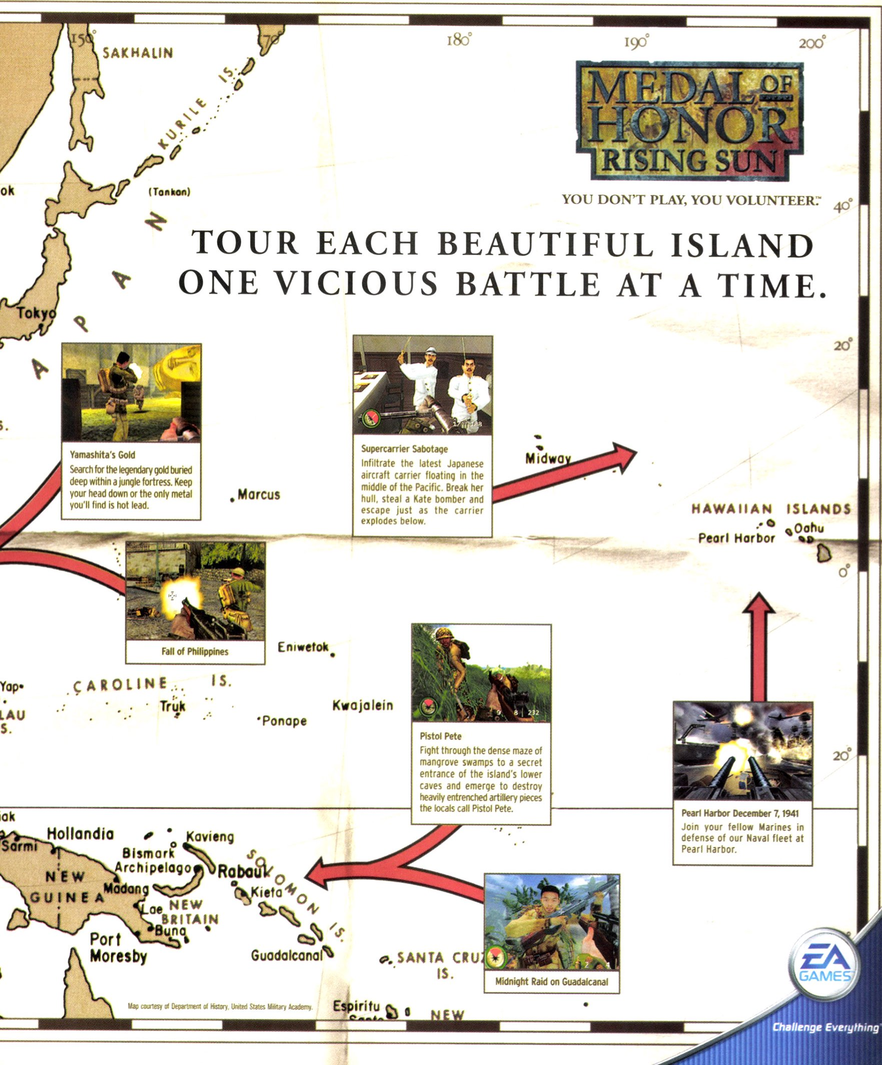
MEDAL OF HONOR
RISING SUN
YOU DON'T PLAY, YOU VOLUNTEER.™
150°
180°
190°
200°
40°
20°
0°
20°
SAKHALIN
KURILE IS.
(Tankan)
JAPAN
Tokyo
Marcus
Midway
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
Pearl Harbor
Oahu
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Yap
CAROLINE IS.
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# TOUR EACH BEAUTIFUL ISLAND ONE VICIOUS BATTLE AT A TIME.

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Search for the legendary gold buried deep within a jungle fortress. Keep your head down or the only metal you'll find is hot lead.

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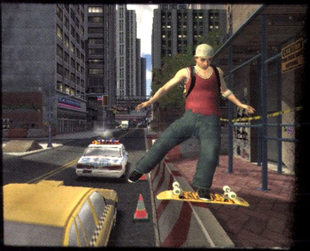
**Pistol Pete**
Fight through the dense maze of mangrove swamps to a secret entrance of the island's lower caves and emerge to destroy heavily entrenched artillery pieces the locals call Pistol Pete.

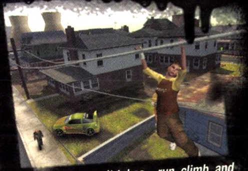
**Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941**
Join your fellow Marines in defense of our Naval fleet at Pearl Harbor.

Midnight Raid on Guadalcanal

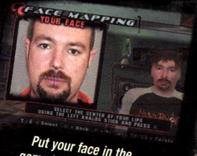
Map courtesy of Department of History, United States Military Academy.



THUG™ stars YOU as a skate punk out to make it big.



Do whatever it takes – run, climb, and of course, skate – to make it to the top.



SELECT THE CENTER OF YOUR LIPS USING THE LEFT ANALOG STICK AND PRESS ✕

Put your face in the game to skate as YOU.*

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Mild Violence
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes
**Game experience may change during online play.**

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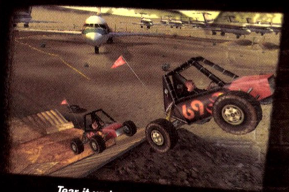
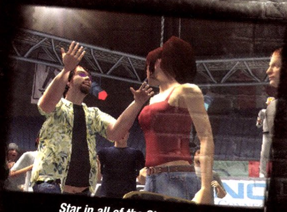
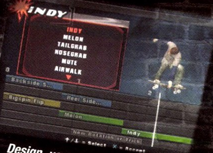
# THE UNDERGROUND



Tear it up in cars or other rides.



Star in all of the Story Mode movies alongside the pros.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INDY
MELON
TAILGRAB
NOSEGRAB
MUTE
AIRWALK
Backside S...
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Melon
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New Rotation or Trick
↑/↓ = Select ✕ = Accept

Design your own tricks, decks, goals, and levels. It's your game!

# TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

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*Face mapping technology is exclusive to PlayStation 2 computer system and requires online connectivity.

NEVERSOFT

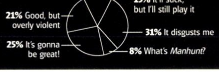
ACTIVISION.

# INPUT

The power of voodoo. Who do? You do!

## OPM POLL

What do you think of *Manhunt*?



Reaction to *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* is overwhelmingly positive. "At first I disregarded it as a game I should like because I'm 'supposed to,'" says George Velesko. "Playing it firsthand reminds me why, sometimes, hype is justified." Still, there is the occasional detractor: "I'm still not very excited," voices Phil Carsner.

### Behind the Scenes at Rockstar

How dumb can this get? Rockstar is being ridiculous by creating *Manhunt*, a game based on snuff films. Was this the dialogue the developers had as they came up with the idea for the game?

**Rockstar Guy 1:** Dammit! Nobody seems to be complaining about *Grand Theft Auto* anymore!

**Rockstar Guy 2:** I know! I thought we were gonna be the Eminem of videogames. I mean, what the hell went wrong? We let them blow people's heads off in *GTA: Vice City*! That seems like enough violence to upset almost anybody. All we want is a little controversy, people! We've failed!

**RG1:** Wait, wait, I have an idea....

**RG2:** A sick, twisted, and disgusting idea? One that will make even the most hardcore guys out there a little queasy?

**RG1:** Yes! A game based on...wait for it...snuff films!

**RG2:** BRILLIANT!

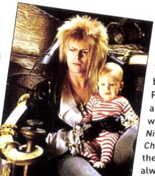
**RG1:** LET THE GOREFEST BEGIN!

Come on, Rockstar. You can do better than this. This is stupid, immature, and comparable to *BMX XXX*.

**UltimateBlueJew**
via e-mail

**It might be a little dismissive to say that Rockstar isn't still getting heat for *GTA*, but we see your point. Is Rockstar now just creating violence for the sake of violence? Everyone, let us know what you think by sending us an e-mail labeled ROCKSTAR VIOLENCE. If you're not familiar with *Manhunt*, check out page 104.**

### David Bowie on Your PS2?



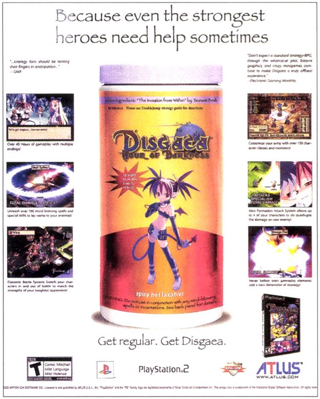
Do you think any game company would ever make the movie *Labyrinth* into a game? If a company like Square did it, and did it right, I think it could be a really good game. It could be an RPG where you play as Sarah, Hoggle, Ludo, and Sir Didymus, and they could get David Bowie to do the voice acting for Jareth. I really like Bowie's acting and wonder if you like the movie, too.

**Zandra**
Draper, Utah

***Labyrinth* rocks. And seeing as how the whole basis of the movie revolves around solving puzzles, it could make for a *great* game. It's doubtful we'll ever see such a thing, unfortunately, but you never know. If Buena Vista can bring back *Tron* (to PCs, anyway) and Capcom is working on a *Nightmare Before Christmas* game, there's always hope.**

### Disgaea-sting!

A full page ad for *Disgaea* (in issue 73, page 125) showed a laxative bottle. What does a laxative have to do with playing a game? The ad is in extremely poor taste and disgusting. I do not want to have my boys (who already think farting is funny) thinking laxatives are funny, and amusing as well. Society already has the younger generation thinking that the grosser it is, the better it is. Who comes up with



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## GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

From message boards to printed page

*OPM*'s monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at gamers.com.

### ICO: BORING?

**TealSmith** doesn't know a great adventure game when he sees one. "OK, I just can't take it anymore," he says. "Everyone calling *Ico* a classic, a work of art. Well, guess what? *Ico* is one of the most boring games ever made. *Ico*, you may look pretty, but it really doesn't help when your gameplay's sh—ty. Anyone disagree?"

**jeffreyjapan** is sensible: "Yes, I disagree. It might not have been an action game full of fast-paced battles, but I enjoyed it a lot."

**MetalGearJared** claims, "I ACTUALLY FELL ASLEEP IN FRONT OF MY TV. That's how boring it is."

"If you think *Ico* is the most boring game ever made, you obviously haven't played *Rune: Viking Warlord*," counters **GamerGuy00**.

"So *State of Emergency* and *Turok* are more your speed?" says **jedi_dad**. "By the way, Boomer is dyslexic. Yorda's just confused."

Meanwhile, **CronoJack** balances it all out: "Still haven't played it."

### VICE CITY: OVERRATED?

Even after being on the shelf for a year now, people are still talking about *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. "I think *Vice City* was overrated," declares **LoneSage**. "After playing it a good solid amount of hours, I have discovered way too many glitches. Plus, the game freezing when I haven't saved in 2 hours equals anger and frustration. I enjoyed *GTA3* more."

"Slightly worse than *GTA3* and received just as well," chimes in **chirs4**. "So yeah, a bit overrated. Still a great game, though."

"Highly overrated," comments **adrinue**. "You drive to one spot, kill someone, repeat. Or drive here, there, and back. Or you go here and kill them, then go there and done. Sheesh, how fun can that be?"

Finally, **Ryosei** puts things in perspective: "An overrated game is defined as one in which the initial reviews are far too generous," he says. "*GTA: Vice City* is simply NOT overrated."

### COSPLAYERS ARE TALKING ABOUT...

For the record, we appreciate the talent and dedication of cosplayers—we really do. They are a bit on the geeky side, though, as we mentioned in reference to the cosplay *Kingdom Hearts* performance at G-Phoria (issue 73, page 51). The denizens of Cosplay.com didn't take so kindly to the comment, though. Here's some stuff they said at their message board. (Thanks to Henry Hall for pointing out this thread to us.)

"Obviously, the writer of that article doesn't know jack sh— about cosplay, and I'd like to see him attempt to make an elaborate costume," says **Eurobeat King**, obviously thinking we'd even consider about giving it a shot.

"I didn't appreciate them badmouthing cosplayers," badmouths **DigitalCactus**. "So apparently, these people who obviously do amazing cosplay and may or may not be future Hollywood costume designers are considered 'geeky' because they dress up as videogame/manga/anime characters?" Yes.

"I badmouth cosplayers!" enters **Kell_Dragon**. "I am one. Get over it!" We like this guy.

And at least **Squall** has a sense of humor about it: "They know nothing. We are nerds who make costumes and dress up. They are nerds who play games all day. LOL. Everyone is a nerd!"

And then there's our favorite, **Crazy Bunta**, whose response is much more entertaining when read unedited: "Being a writer for a video game magazine as well as the newspaper I have to say. The writer of that article is not a writer. He know nothing about how to write. being a writer, I can criticize other writers it's only fair and that articel was a lousy read." Well said, **Bunta boy**.

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**Tracy Chilton**
Arlington, TX

**Last time we checked, ads are part of society. Atlus is just trying to get a cheap laugh here. It obviously didn't work for you.**

## Gimme Some Soul

I just want to say that from all the *OPM*s I have, there's one review that's missing for PS1. It's the root of *Soul Calibur* and probably the greatest fighting game of its time—*Soul Blade*.

**A.L 41**
via e-mail

**Nah, we didn't forget *Soul Blade*—we just didn't exist as a magazine when it was released in 1996. But our predecessor, *PSX*, liked it, with the three reviewers scoring it 93, 91, and 90 out of 100.**

## Vectorman Loses His Balls

When I heard about *Vectorman* returning, I was ecstatic. I told everyone I know about it (well, the ones who actually play videogames). Imagine my hopes of the old-style V-Man returning to PS2 to remind those who have forgotten the good old days. Now, imagine my hopes being crushed like a bowling ball on a bug.

Vectorman no longer transforms into his multiple weapons like he used to—now he carries them around like everyone else. He doesn't look the same at all, which, if anyone remembers, was like an array of floating balls like Rayman. Now he looks like a *Halo* wannabe. This is ruining Vectorman's image. One of the things that made him so great was the fact that he stood out from everyone else. Now, he looks like a freakin' garbage disposal. GIVE THE MAN BACK HIS BALLS!

**Invader Zim**
via e-mail

**We'll wait till we see the actual game to pass ultimate judgment, but our gut feeling is to agree with you. Vectorman seems somehow...less manly now.**

Vectorman then

Vectorman now

## Hardcore Gaymer

Thank you for acknowledging the gay gaming market in the first part of your Only in Japan section in Issue 73. Still, I wouldn't be caught dead playing a game like *Chou Aniki*—I like good games. Ones like *Vice City*, *Final Fantasy*, *Ico*, *Soul Calibur II*, etc. Anyway, your magazine rocks, even if I don't care for Lara in a wet suit.

**Dave Barkley**
via e-mail

## You're WAY Too Hardcore If...

In Issue 73, you named every Belmont in your "you're too hardcore if..." thing. [*"You're too hardcore if you can name every Belmont in chronological order," page 94—Ed.*] So, I decided to mention a very small thing. Christopher had a son named Solieyu—not a Belmont to kill Dracula, but a Belmont nonetheless.

**Hobberchaun**
via e-mail

**Thanks...we think.**

## TATTOOS OF THE MONTH

### From the Square kingdom

We're starting to get so many tattoos, it's hard to print them all! This month, Linda McCarthy of Janesville, WI, and some dude called "Le Quack" share their ink with us.

"The heart looks a little crooked, but it's my superhuman elasticity," insists Quack about his *Kingdom Hearts* tatt.

Linda says, "My favorite series is *Final Fantasy*. Thanks to Austin at Baldwin's Body Art in Evansville, WI, I now have that badass fire-breathing aeon Ifrit."

## ASK US ANYTHING!

### It all begins and ends with Joe Rybicki...

### JAK II: JUST ✪✪✪◐?

**Q.** In Issue 74, you guys (Gary Steinman, to be more specific) gave *Jak II* only 3.5 stars because some parts of the game were too challenging. Is it really that bad? I want to know what Joe Rybicki thought of *Jak II*, because he reviewed the first *Jak and Daxter* and gave it a 5.

**David M**
via e-mail

**A.** First of all, yes, it is "that bad"—meaning, as a 3.5, it's actually pretty good. There are only three better possible scores Gary could have awarded it and twice as many lower ones. Basically, 3.5 means that anyone interested in a game's genre stands a very good chance of having a very good time. It just won't wow quite as many people as a 4 or higher. And Joe concurs with the rating. "I haven't played the game nearly as much as Gary has, but from my experience with it, Gary's review was spot-on," he says. "The game is gorgeous, and it does a lot of neat things. It's also much, *much* too hard. What good is a great-looking, sometimes great-playing game if it makes you so angry you end up breaking the disc in half?"

### THE SEARCH FOR KLONOA

**Q.** I must know where I can find *Klonoa: Door to Phantomile* (the PS1 game) anywhere besides the Internet. I must have it. I am such a Klonoa fan (I already have *Klonoa 2* and the GBA game). Please, *please* tell me! (But no one else—it's hard enough to find as is!)

**Carrot Girl**
via e-mail

**A.** Well, we figure you won't actually mind us answering this for everyone—'cause outside of the Internet, it's a total crapshoot as to where you can find it. All we can say is to try your local used-game stores. If you do want to venture your way to the Web, though, we'd suggest trying eBay or Half.com. You're looking at paying close to 40 bucks.

### CAN I ROCK A MIC LIKE A VANDAL?

**Q.** I was wondering if you've heard if Konami or any other company plans to make a microphone to go with *Karaoke Revolution*. I understand the USB headset is already available and will be compatible with the game, but I think a microphone peripheral would add more to the experience.

**Lone Wolf**
via e-mail

**A.** At press time, we know this: Konami is looking at manufacturers for a mic peripheral—Logitech has been mentioned. We have no idea when it's due out, how much it will be, or if it will in any way come packaged with the game.

### KILL.SWITCHING THE ESRB RATING

**Q.** I was visiting a couple of websites when I noticed that *kill.switch* has an M rating on some sites, while on other sites it has a T rating. I went to ESRB.com, and sure enough, it is listed as both M and T. Which is right? This is not the first game that I have seen this happen to. Can you shed some light on this please?

**David Wyatt**
via e-mail

**A.** We know what you mean! Our visit to EBgames.com reveals a Mature rating, while the game's official site (Killswitch.com) lists a Teen one. And you're right—as we write this, ESRB.com lists the game as both T and M. But we've checked with Namco itself—T it is.

### GUNCONCERNS

**Q.** I just picked up *Time Crisis II* with the Guncon2 the other day. I can't believe I waited so long. It is a very addictive game, and I love the Guncon2. What is even better is my wife likes the game as well. I was looking around online for a second Guncon2. The cheapest I found was around $45. For a little more, I would rather have another game with an extra gun. Could you tell me what games have or will be released with the Guncon2, and if any other games are compatible with it?

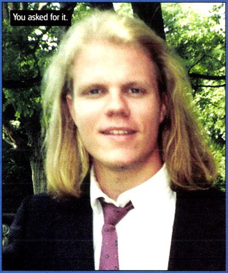
**Chad Eckleberry**
via e-mail

**A.** If you like *Time Crisis II*, Chad, buying *Time Crisis 3* is a no-brainer—there's your second Guncon2 right there. Other Namco light-gun PS2 games (*Ninja Assault* and *Vampire Night*) aren't quite as good, but they're still quick, mindless fun. Otherwise, Empire's *Endgame* sucks, but you can get a different kind of experience from Capcom—both *Dino Stalker* and *Resident Evil: Dead Aim* require you to use the D-pad on the back of the gun to move around.

### YOU SURE YOU WANNA KNOW?

**Q.** Has Joe Rybicki ever tried to grow some hair?

**MidgetMan2oo2**
via e-mail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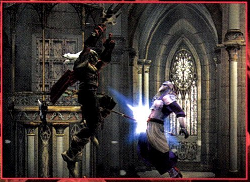
# SLAUGHTER MERCILESSLY.



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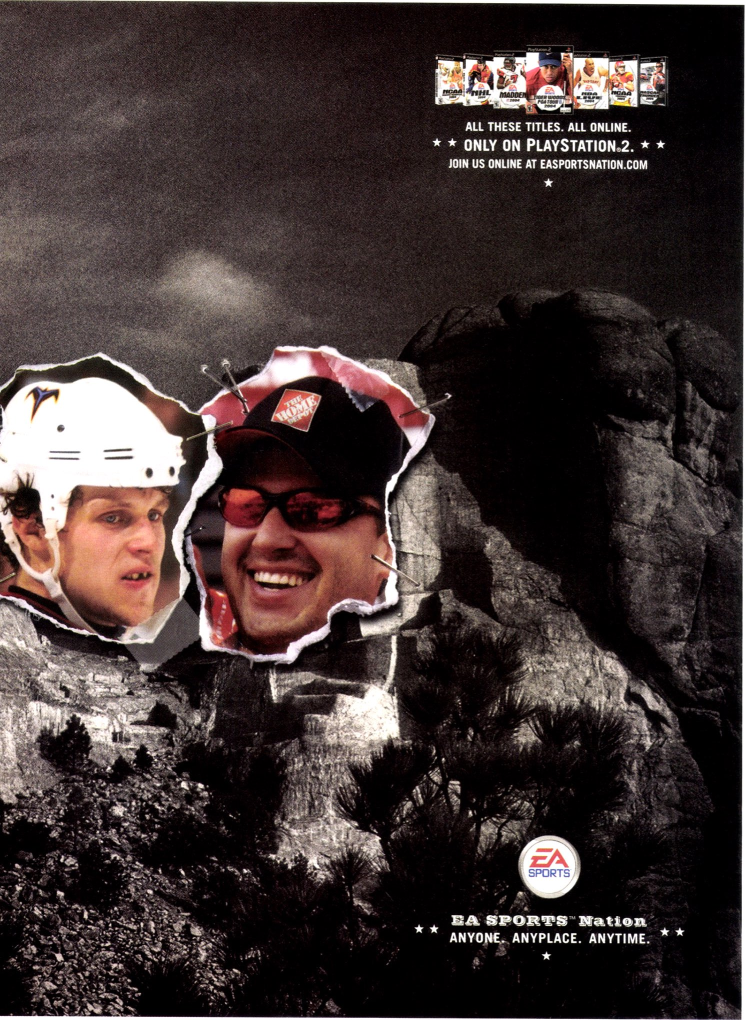
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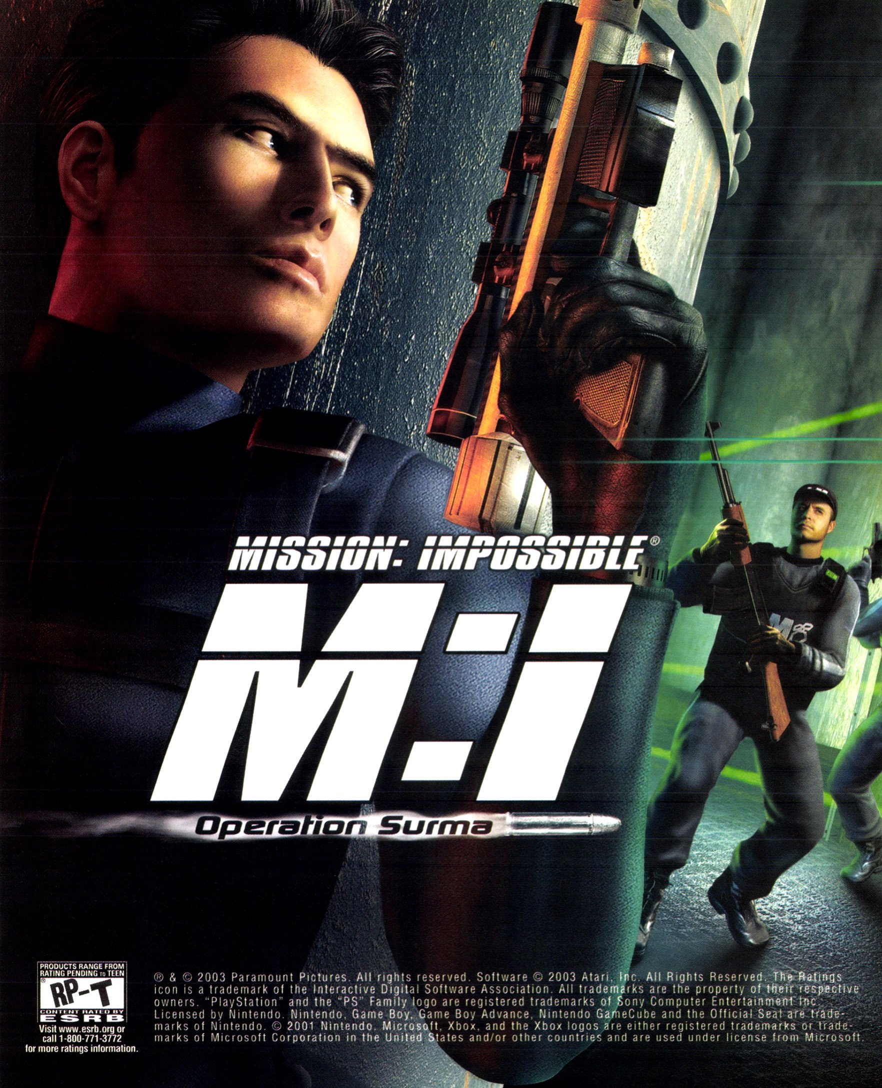

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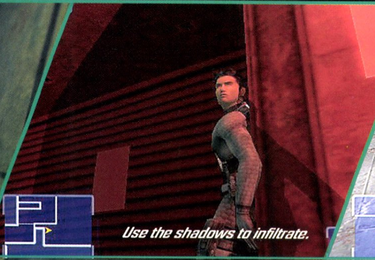
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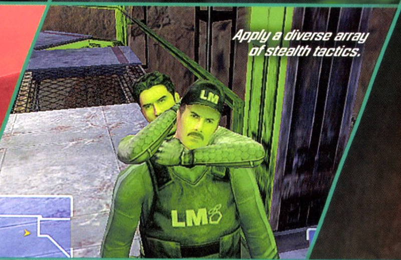
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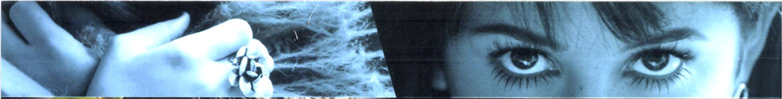

**MIDWAY**

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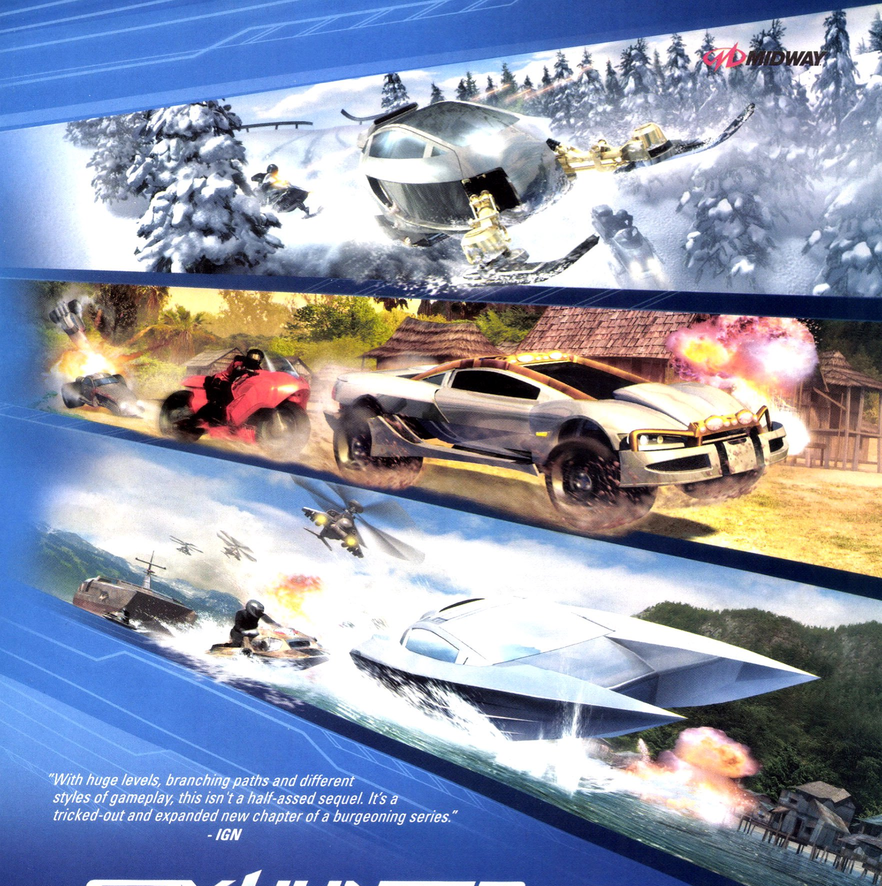

*"With huge levels, branching paths and different styles of gameplay, this isn't a half-assed sequel. It's a tricked-out and expanded new chapter of a burgeoning series."*
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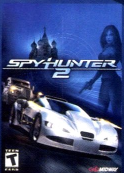
SPYHUNTER 2
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# FINAL FANTASY VII: ADVENT CHILDREN

## Cloud and Sephiroth return in a Final Fantasy...movie?

As we reported last month, Square Enix was scheduled to show *Final Fantasy VII-2* at a Tokyo Game Show press conference. While we're pleased to say that a follow-up, titled *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*, was shown, we were shocked to learn that the project isn't actually a game. At least in the traditional sense, it doesn't seem to be.

Tetsuya Nomura, the character designer for *Final Fantasy VII*, strolled onto the stage with other members of Square Enix's product development division, along with the president of the company, Yoichi Wada. Then a movie played, showing Cloud racing on his motorcycle toward a dual-bladed enemy who bears a passing resemblance to Cloud's nemesis, Sephiroth. After a brief fight, the movie transitioned to a scene with Cloud at the beach, where he is overlooking what appears to be the old Shinra headquarters from the first area in *Final Fantasy VII*. But perhaps the best scene from the two-minute clip features an unknown character kneeling in front of a cloaked man sitting in a chair. Just as he reaches out to touch the man's hand, the film cuts to a stylized version of Sephiroth's infamous attack on Nibelheim.

Beyond what was shown at TGS, Square Enix has revealed few details, except that *Advent Children* will take place two years after the events that transpired in the game and the film will be approximately 60 minutes long.

At TGS, Senior Vice President Yoshinori Kitase explained the motivation for the project. Nomura was initially approached about creating an offshoot of *FFVII*, just to please all the fans eager to know what happens next. The new product, though, won't come in the form of a game; Square Enix is calling it "visual content." Nomura decided this project would be interesting, so Square Enix assembled a staff consisting of members of the original *FFVII* team, as well as team members from other games in the series. "We wanted to make sure that we were successful," said Kitase. "So we gathered staff from *Final Fantasy* that were scattered across the company—we're confident it will be a success."

As for the reason a game sequel wasn't made, Kitase said it would have been too easy. Instead, Square wanted to try something new, something that would test its skills.

Interestingly, Senior Vice President Shinji Hashimoto repeatedly stressed that a specific release date is currently unknown for *Advent Children*. The company is also continuing to hold discussions on how to distribute the project, leading to speculation that DVD isn't the only format being considered (PSP perhaps?). The other possibility: *Advent Children* might be the world's most expensive teaser for a PS2 sequel.

### Cloud to take on Carrot Top?

Perhaps the weirdest thing to come out of the *Advent Children* press conference was a statement made by Square Enix President Yoichi Wada, who mentioned the possibility of product tie-ins for the movie, like cell phones manufactured by NTT DoCoMo—one of Japan's largest telecommunications companies.

**48**

**HOLIDAYS!**

**Your huge buyer's guide**

The ultimate shopping list!

**62**

**KARAOKE**

**Real rock stars rock out**

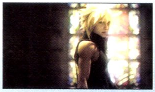
Who's the best singer?

**70**

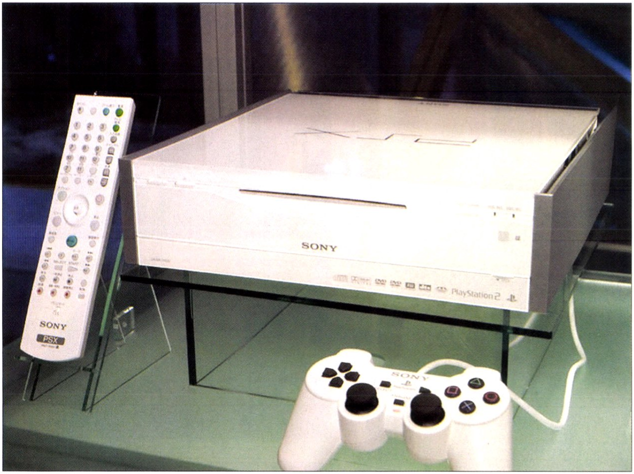
**BUSTIN' OUT**

***The Sims*, only better**

More of a game, less of a toy



**PAY TO PLAY** A subscription to *Final Fantasy XI* will run $12.95 per month, though the first 30 days are free. Creating an extra character will cost another buck.



# THE FUTURE IS NOW

## With sales going strong, Sony's focus remains on PS2

At its 2003 Gamers' Day press event, Sony made one thing clear: PS1 and PS2 continue to dominate the videogame industry. "Since 1995, the PlayStation business has been the reason videogames have become the third pillar [of entertainment]," says Kaz Hirai, president and CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment America. To date, PS1 has sold more than 35 million units in North America, while PS2 has sold more than 20 million units—and it's on pace to surpass the total number of PS1s sold.

Steady sales numbers for the two PlayStation platforms is a significant reason for Sony's decision to keep any official info about PS3 under wraps. Success has also motivated Sony to look within to uncover and change its weakest areas, such as its lackluster sports development team, 989 Studios. "We're bringing in new leadership," says Jack Tretton, executive vice president of SCEA. "We want to be where we were in the past."

Online play is also a major part of Sony's PS2 strategy. "We have to lead the customer base online because the consumer needs some hand-holding," notes Andrew House, executive vice president of SCEA. "[Now] we have to shift our focus from the core market to the mass market." Sony has already leapt in that direction with its Network Adaptor bundle, and it plans to attract even more consumers to online gaming with the release of the PS2 hard drive in North America.

The $99 40GB drive—due out in March 2004—will include a preinstalled copy of Square Enix's massively multiplayer online RPG *Final Fantasy XI*, along with a variety of demos. *SOCOM II* and *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain* will be among the first to take advantage of the HDD's downloadable-content support. And if you want to use your PS2 as a media player, the HDD will let you play MP3s and view and edit photos.

Sony's PSX, a version of the PS2 hardware with DVD- and CD-burning capabilities, also factors into Sony's focus on the current generation of hardware; Sony wants to keep North American interest in PSX to a minimum in hopes of avoiding consumer confusion. "The PSX is a departure from interactive entertainment," says Hirai. "Sony sees it as more of a home-entertainment platform." PSX is set to release this year in Japan with two models hitting store shelves—a 160GB HD version that will retail for approximately $700, and a 250GB version that will cost around $900. A 2004 release is scheduled for North American and European markets.

### PSP AT NEXT E3

Sony isn't keen on releasing details about new console hardware that could cut into PS2's life span, but development on the PSP handheld gaming device is continuing at a surprisingly brisk pace. Software libraries and middleware for PSP are in development, and an emulator designed to run on PC hardware will be available for developers this fall. Actual hardware kits won't be around until sometime later in the fall, but Sony will show a PSP prototype at E3 in May 2004.

Tretton says there will be about 10 games available at launch, some based on familiar franchises. Each internal SCEA development team is already working on a title. Third-party support has been building since PSP was announced, but Sony wants to be sure it's careful about which games are approved. "[We'll have to decide] which games work well within that environment and which don't," says House.

PSP's battery life remains a hot topic. Sony continues to claim it will be comparable to similar devices. When pressed further, though, the company would only say PSP won't have the 10-hour battery life of Game Boy Advance; rather, it'll be closer to that of a portable DVD player.

PSP is on track for a worldwide release late next year.

## DATA STREAM

### Complete Chaos

**SNK Playmore's hardcore NeoGeo 2D fighter, *SNK Vs. Capcom: SVC Chaos*, is coming to PS2 in Japan. An official release date hasn't been set, but expect some Hadoken hijinks by 2004.**

### Up and Atom

**A new game based on the classic Japanese manga (and anime) *Astro Boy* is in development. Hitmaker will handle the task of bringing the internationally beloved character to life on the PS2.**

### Double the Stealth

FROM SOFTWARE

**From Software revealed at TGS that it's working on *Tenchu Kurenai*—a new game in the *Tenchu* series that features Ayame and an unknown female stealth assassin.**

### Death to PS2

p.o.d.
Payable on Death

**P.O.D.'s new album, *Payable on Death*, will feature a special version of *Amplitude* that includes an exclusive P.O.D. song that fans can remix. Rock on!**

enjoy the ride!™

**TRAVISRICE**
CARL HYNDMAN PHOTO.

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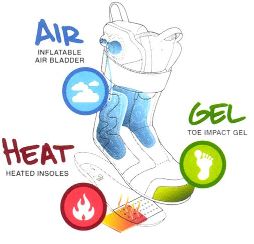
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Mild Language
Suggestive Themes
Mild Lyrics

*** INTERNET CONNECTIVITY REQUIRED FOR PLAYSTATION 2 AND PCCD.** PlayStation®2 online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately).

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NINTENDO GAMECUBE
XBOX
PlayStation 2
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UNDERGROUND
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unleash your wicked creation online* to prey on the innocent. **E-brake by eagames.com**

68
Turbo
UNDRGND
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**www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/giblets.htm**
Did you know that the giblets packed in your turkey aren't from the original bird? Or that there are no grading standards for giblets? Yech.

## DATEBOOK

# NOVEMBER 2K3

SUNDAY · MONDAY · TUESDAY · WEDNESDAY · THURSDAY · FRIDAY · SATURDAY

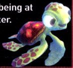
OK, look, some of these release dates might change. It's inevitable. So don't yell at us. DON'T YELL AT US!! It's not our fault.

Did you know that over 45 million turkeys are consumed on Thanksgiving. That's a lot of giblets.

**1** **DYK?** The Celts used to celebrate today as New Year's Day and the coming of winter. In 835, Pope Gregory IV proclaimed it **All Saint's Day**. In Mexico, they also celebrate ***Día de los Muertos***, or Day of the Dead.

**2** Season 15 of ***The Simpsons*** begins tonight. Some people say it hasn't been as funny lately. We'd like to kindly tell those nice folks to shut up. It's still the best thing on television—by a long shot.

**3** Who knew that ***Finding Nemo*** would be the summer's top blockbuster? Pixar's digital-direct transfer to DVD should make watching it at home almost as good as being at the theater.



**4** ***Lord of the Rings: Return of the King, Frogger's Adventures, Dynasty Warriors 4 XL, Trivial Pursuit, Kya, Whiplash, Bloody Roar 4, Barbie: Treasures in Time, True Crime, Cat in the Hat, Rogue Ops, SOCOM II, Prince of Persia, Eye Toy,*** and ***Lupin the 3rd*** are out.

**5** Happy **Guy Fawkes Day**. Hope you didn't spend all your money yesterday, since ***Matrix Revolutions*** opens today. Also, we've been looking forward to **Will Ferrell** in ***Elf***, which opens Friday.

**6**

**7**

**8**

**9** It may sound like the name for the new James Bond flick, but today is actually **Chaos Never Dies Day**... whatever that means.

**10** ***Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*** is on DVD today. Hopefully, the director's commentary will explain how the Terminator gets really old through the trilogy.

**11** In stores: ***Sphinx, Fatal Frame 2, Bratz, Monster 4x4: MOM, World Champ. Pool, Ratchet & Clank 2, NCAA Final Four, American Idol, Crash Nitro Kart, Goblin Comm., The Hobbit, T3, MOH: Rising Sun, ESPN College Hoops, Karaoke Revolution,*** and ***Cabela's Dangerous Hunts***

**12** **Jason Babler's birthday list:**

☐ Haro

☐ Haro

☐ Haro

**16** It's **Have a Party With Your Bear Day**. Sounds like a good opportunity to run this pic again.

**17** **Britney Spears**' new album ***In the Zone*** comes out this week, so expect lots of bizarre cross promotions like what you see to the right. (Hey, we're not *really* complaining.)

**18** ***Muppets Party, Need for Speed Underground, EverQuest: Frontiers, SpyHunter 2, NCAA March Mad., Space Channel 5-2, Battlestar Gal., Legacy of Kain: Def., I-Ninja, Metal Arms, SWON, Manhunt, Ghost Recon,*** and ***Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*** are out today.

**19** With all the games that came out yesterday, we neglected to mention that ***The Two Towers*** Special Precious Extended DVD was released yesterday. Buy it. Now.

**20** Ugh. ***Cat in the Hat*** starring **Mike Myers** opens tomorrow. Please don't go or they'll turn ***Green Eggs and Ham*** into a movie.

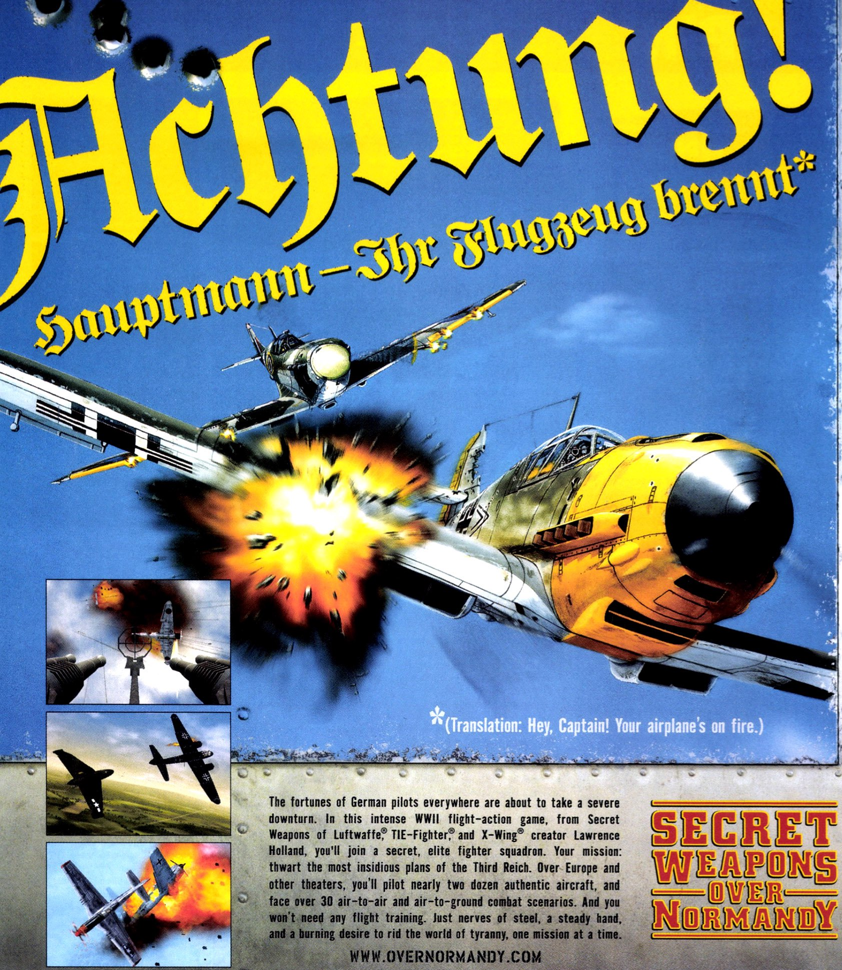
**23/30** **It's National Cashew Day**. Celebrate by picking all the cashews out of a mixed-nut can and setting them free.

**24**

**25** ***Masters of the Universe, Spawn, Lowrider, Cy Girls, Carmen Sandiego: To Track a Thief,*** and ***AirForce Delta Strike*** wrap it up for PS2 releases this month.

**26** Thanks to a stellar performance by Johnny Depp, ***Pirates of the Caribbean*** turned out to be a fun flick after all. We highly doubt that Eddie Murphy will be able to rise to the challenge in ***The Haunted Mansion***, opening today.

**27** In J. Lo's immortal words in *Gigli*, "It's turkey time. Gobble. Gobble."



*(Translation: Hey, Captain! Your airplane's on fire.)

The fortunes of German pilots everywhere are about to take a severe downturn. In this intense WWII flight-action game, from Secret Weapons of Luftwaffe®, TIE-Fighter® and X-Wing® creator Lawrence Holland, you'll join a secret, elite fighter squadron. Your mission: thwart the most insidious plans of the Third Reich. Over Europe and other theaters, you'll pilot nearly two dozen authentic aircraft, and face over 30 air-to-air and air-to-ground combat scenarios. And you won't need any flight training. Just nerves of steel, a steady hand, and a burning desire to rid the world of tyranny, one mission at a time.

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**ÇA VA? ÇA VA BIEN!**
Actor Jean Reno will be providing his voice only in French for *Onimusha 3*.

**It's still coming**
Capcom's cel-shaded action game *Crimson Tears* is still in development and on track for a 2004 release. Producer Tatsuya Minami says work has progressed significantly since the E3 demo.

## THE INSIDER

### BABY STEPS

Every once in a while, you have a good week—the kind in which 20 things fall into place at once, and a glimmer of a great experience rears its shiny head and roars.

This was one of those weeks. Thank God.

You see, after spending over a year on a game, you fall into a rut of sorts. Not a bad rut, the kind that has you doing the same thing over and over again, but a rut of unending lists of new things that must be done and old things that must be fixed.

Think of game development as a giant jigsaw puzzle. But instead of a puzzle consisting of 300 pieces that, when formed, portray a dog dressed up like a fireman, you have a puzzle of thousands of art assets and tens of thousands of lines of programming code. And unless you're making a sequel, it's a puzzle with no clear instructions or pictures to replicate—it's all about trying to create the best pieces you can and then forming something cool with them.

The problem with trying to put all these pieces together is that you sometimes have to push seemingly important aspects of the game—like making stuff work properly and look good—off for a while. This freaked me out at first; I'm anal as hell, so putting something obviously unpolished into the game was almost repulsive to me.

What I'm quickly learning, though, is it's all about baby steps. Before you can get a camera that works beautifully, you have one that's barely functional. Before fighting feels good, you have to go through hundreds of A.I. and animation trials, most of which are terrible. Before the collision code is solid, you'll be dropping through walls like mad. During this time, the fear that you'll end up releasing a substandard product starts bouncing around in your head so violently that you almost start to believe it.

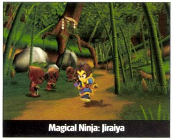
People who've made more than one game know this is a normal step in the development process, but for those of us who've never been through a full cycle...well, it's maddening. Not to mention a little scary.

This week was nice, though. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but in the course of tweaking and fixing stuff over the last few days, it's become clear the baby steps have combined to make a few huge strides. Instead of a bunch of stuff that doesn't work, we have a bunch of stuff that does—and while the game still isn't free of bugs or other annoyances, it's become clear what's left for us to polish.

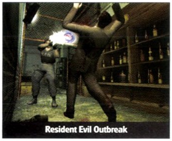
And even better, you can play through a level and actually have a good time. Which, for somebody who places fun over almost everything else, makes me a damn happy man.

**Ryan Lockhart rlockhart@sevenstudios.com enjoys the fact he can rotate the game's camera without it getting stuck on every wall. Ah, progress!**

Onimusha 3



Magical Ninja: Jiraiya



Resident Evil Outbreak

PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
PLAYER 3
PLAYER 4

Monster Hunter

Ken
KO
E.Honda

Hyper Street Fighter II

女性レプリロイド：
ここはセントラルタワーよ
ギガンティスの中心に位置する建物なの

Mega Man X: Command Mission

# MONSTROUS SUPPORT

## Zombies, dragons, and street fighters bolster Capcom's TGS lineup

While much was made of Square Enix's presence before the start of this year's Tokyo Game Show, Capcom easily takes the prize for having one of the best PS2 lineups at the event. Here's a look at what was on display:

***Hyper Street Fighter II: The Anniversary Edition.*** Similar to the *Darkstalkers* compilation released for Dreamcast a couple of years ago, the game lets you choose any version of a *Street Fighter II* character, so the original incarnation of Guile could be used against a *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* version of Ryu. Not surprisingly, it includes a variety of extras, like a gallery mode, original music, and the full *Street Fighter II* animated film. *Hyper Street Fighter II* will be hitting stores in 2004.

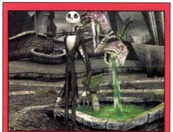
***Mega Man X: Command Mission.*** Capcom takes all the action of the previous *Mega Man* games and squeezes it into a standard RPG. Each member of your three-man party will not only have standard attacks, but also special attacks that can be executed by pressing different button combinations. "We're carrying over all the traits of the *Mega Man* series and bringing them into an RPG setting," says Producer Tatsuya Kitabayashi. "We're making it in a way fans will appreciate and like." Look for it in 2004.

***Magical Ninja: Jiraiya.*** The last of the previously unannounced titles, this 3D action game features the work of *Maximo* artist Susumu Matsushita, and will take place in a fantasy world with mythical enemies and locations. The main character will have a full range of classic ninja skills, such as hanging on ceilings and disappearing in a cloud of smoke. Its cooperative mode lets you and a friend team up as two ninjas, but one person can also play as a monster.

***Monster Hunter.*** Speaking of monsters, this online RPG is one of the most impressive games in Capcom's library. *Monster Hunter* will have a single-player mode, but the online action looks too intense to pass up. You and three other players will join forces to explore the land and stalk dragons, with the goal of slaying the massive beasts. The new video at TGS showed off all sorts of interesting gameplay features, ranging from huge traps to different types of hunting techniques.

***Resident Evil Outbreak.*** *Monster Hunter* isn't the only online game. *Resident Evil Outbreak* is a major part of Capcom's online-gaming push. In our conversation with Producer Tsuyoshi Tanaka, he revealed that sections of the game are being designed by different people who worked on previous *Resident Evil* games, so each will present a unique interpretation on the type of fear *Resident Evil* tries to create. Capcom also plans to expand on *Resident Evil Outbreak* in the future with add-ons and sequels.

***Onimusha 3* and *Onimusha Blade Warriors.*** Producer Kenji Inafune says work is continuing on both games. His team has just started on *Onimusha 3*'s CG sequences, which will be overseen by a famous Japanese movie director and include motion capture supplied by an action star. Inafune also pushed the idea of *Onimusha 3* as two separate games, since Samanosuke and Jacque Blanc (Jean Reno) present different gameplay experiences.



### TWO NIGHTMARES

*Kingdom Hearts II* won't be the only game to have characters from Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Capcom is working on a game based on the film that will feature Jack Skellington and the rest of the crew from Halloween Town. Too bad it won't be released for another year.

FINAL FANTASY® X-2
IT'S NOT OVER.
TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY
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● REC

# THEY JUST KILLED CASH.
# NOW THEY WANT TO KILL HIM AGAIN.

AMERICA IS FULL OF RUN DOWN, BROKEN RUST-BELT TOWNS WHERE NOBODY CARES AND ANYTHING GOES.
IN CARCER CITY, NOTHING MATTERS ANYMORE AND ALL THAT'S LEFT ARE CHEAP THRILLS.
THE ULTIMATE RUSH IS THE POWER TO GRANT LIFE AND TAKE IT AWAY, FOR SPORT. THIS TIME JAMES EARL CASH, YOU ARE THE SPORT.
THEY GAVE YOU YOUR LIFE BACK. NOW, THEY ARE GOING TO HUNT YOU DOWN.

YOU AWAKE TO THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN PANICKED BREATH.
YOU MUST RUN, HIDE AND FIGHT TO SURVIVE.
IF YOU CAN STAY ALIVE LONG ENOUGH, YOU MAY FIND OUT WHO DID THIS TO YOU.

## THE FINAL CUT

● REC
TCR : 00 32 05:45

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Strong Language
Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

PlayStation®2

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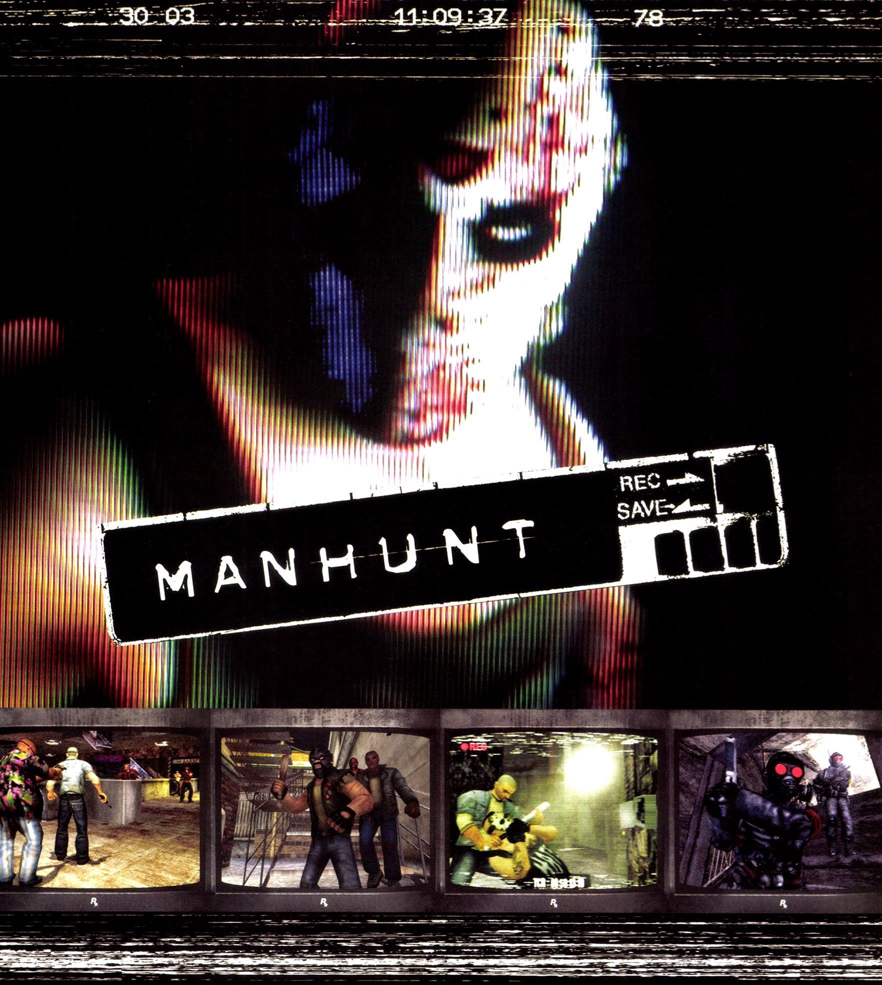


WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/MANHUNT

Note: Rockstar will be following ESA guidelines for M rated games in the marketing of this game. This game contains violent language and behavior and may not be appropriate for persons under the age of 17. The story, names and incidents portrayed herein are fictitious. No identification or similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is intended or should be inferred. Any resemblance is coincidental. The makers and publishers of this videogame do not in any way endorse, condone or encourage this kind of behavior.

# what to buy this holiday

## and who to buy it for

Struggling to decide what you should buy? That's understandable. Lots of games were released this year, and the holiday season will see more than 10 games hitting stores every week. To make life easier, we've done your shopping list for you. We even broke it down so you know what kinds of games will work for different personalities...

**Illustrations by Jason and Heather Martin**
Artplaymix.com

## … LIKES TO BLOW $&*#@ UP!

### Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando

There is no evidence whatsoever that either Ratchet or Clank are embarking on their adventures *sans* undergarments. We've devoted considerable resources to the research, and it's clear that the title is misleading.

### SOCOM II

Buy this, go online, find a room with "OPM" in the header, and someone from this magazine will gladly hand you your ass. We'll even gift wrap it for you. Best. Online. Shooter. Ever. Read our review this month if you want more reasons to buy it.

### War of the Monsters

Ideally suited for gamers with a sense of humor or irony. The '50s schlock sci-fi theme isn't to everyone's taste, but the city-smashing gameplay is incredibly satisfying. It also features a 50-foot-tall fighting monkey, and that has to count for something, doesn't it?

### 007: NightFire

Buy this for anyone you know that does a half-decent Sean Connery impersonation. "Yesh, thank you for purchashing the *Jamesh Bond* game for me, Mish Moneypenny. I very much appreshiate it. Would you like me to kish you under the misheltoe?"

### Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

Anyone who's not excited about the movie is clearly ill, so the opportunity to completely ruin the surprise by playing the game a month earlier is something no one will want to pass up.

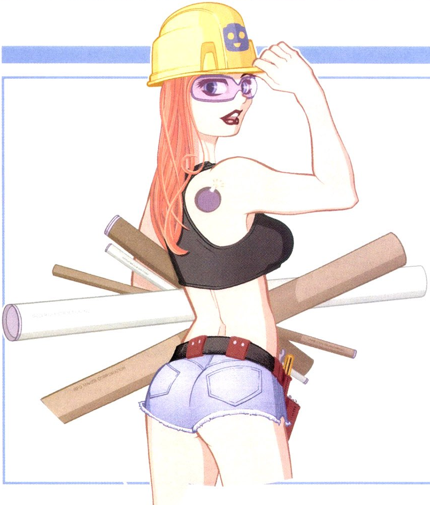
### Time Crisis 3

What's not to like about pointing a brightly colored plastic gun at your TV screen and then shooting at bad guys? The game's a great gift because it comes in a really, really big box. People like getting gifts in big boxes. Stick a big bow on it and you're set.

### Freedom Fighters

A good-looking shooter in which you can get people to join your gang just by looking at them a certain way. Thank God real life doesn't work like that. Scooter would have a permanent angry posse that he'd refer to as the Bon Vivants.

## … WANTS TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD



### Magic Pengel

Officially the most clever idea for a videogame ever. You *draw* your character and then make him fight—although the drawing stuff is so cool, you may forget about the fighting altogether.

### RPG Maker 2

If there was an award for "most complicated videogame ever conceived," *RPG Maker 2* would win it. It's difficult to get into, but perseverance reaps big rewards. Playing an RPG you made yourself is quite a thrill.

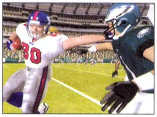
### The Sims

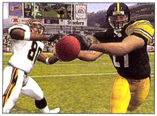
Who doesn't like telling people when they should go to the toilet? It's like the ultimate power trip. Enjoy this and other superficially boring things in one of the most strangely compelling games of the year. Perfect for any obsessive-compulsive friends or relatives

### Dark Cloud 2

The first *Dark Cloud* was great, but the sequel is absolutely fantastic. The cartoon-style visuals give it charm, and the gameplay depth means it will get plenty of playtime. You also get to build big robots by taking photographs of things.

## ... HAS SEASON TICKETS





### Madden NFL 2004

Chances are, you've bought this already—at last count, EA Sports had already sold 2 million copies. Still, if you're looking to endear yourself to a football fan, there's little more you could do...

### ESPN Football

...except maybe introduce them to Sega's pigskin game. It plays a little differently than *Madden*, and some people swear they prefer it. Does anyone really need two football games? No, but this isn't about "need"—it's about look and feel and all that good stuff. Sega's game rocks, and the hardcore love it.

### ESPN Basketball

There are plenty of b-ball games to choose from (see our Reviews section this month, but Sega has made the best every year since b-ball games began. This is the one to buy for people who take it all *really* seriously.

### Tiger Woods 2004

It's official: Golf is fun. It's especially fun with a DMX soundtrack, online competition, and the option to create a perfect replica of yourself. This game will single-handedly make golfing hip.

### NBA Street 2

EA Sports Big proves that it's better at street ball than it is at "proper" basketball, which is surprising considering that EA is a megacorporation, and hardly anything about it is "urban" or "street." This is one of those games that even non-sports-gamers will get a kick out of. Cool soundtrack, too.

### Winning Eleven 6

This game's name takes up so much space that we refuse to print it in its entirety. What you need to know is that this is the best soccer game ever made. Yes, *FIFA* is good (especially *FIFA 2004*, which is awsome), but this is better.

### NBA Live 2004

Some people will play only the EA Sports games, so bear that in mind while gift-shopping for Mr. Awkward. In the past, that strategy has become unstuck in regard to b-ball, but this year is different. *Live 2004* rocks.

## ... LOVES TO THROW A PARTY

TOKEN
REQUIRED

### Soul Calibur II

*Soul Calibur II*'s ability to draw a crowd is matched only by its ability to rile up its players and turn even the most timid gamer into a savage, ultracompetitive maniac. Pass the pad and play "winner stays on." We guarantee you can't play just once, and that's just in the two-player mode.

### VF4: Evolution

If beating people with swords isn't your bag, then surely, pummeling them with your bare hands is the next best thing. We've killed hours playing *VF4* and can't think of any reason why you shouldn't, too. Plus, it's a bargain, too!

### Ape Escape 2

Everyone loves monkeys, and apes are the next best thing. So, it stands to reason that everyone will want to play a game that stars a whole bunch of apes, right? Right! If you like fun, you'll almost certainly like *Ape Escape 2*.

### Eye Toy

Invite some friends over, plug in your Eye Toy, and *Wishy Washy* alone will break the ice. When all you have to do is wave your arms around, no one has an excuse not to have a good time. Do your parents play videogames? Put them in front of this and they'll graduate to *Growlanser* before you know it.

### TimeSplitters 2

What could be more fun than running around shooting at things? Playing with three friends and shooting at *them* instead, that's what. *TimeSplitters 2* still has the best Deathmatch mode on PS2. Why? Because it's fast and fun.

### DDRMax 4

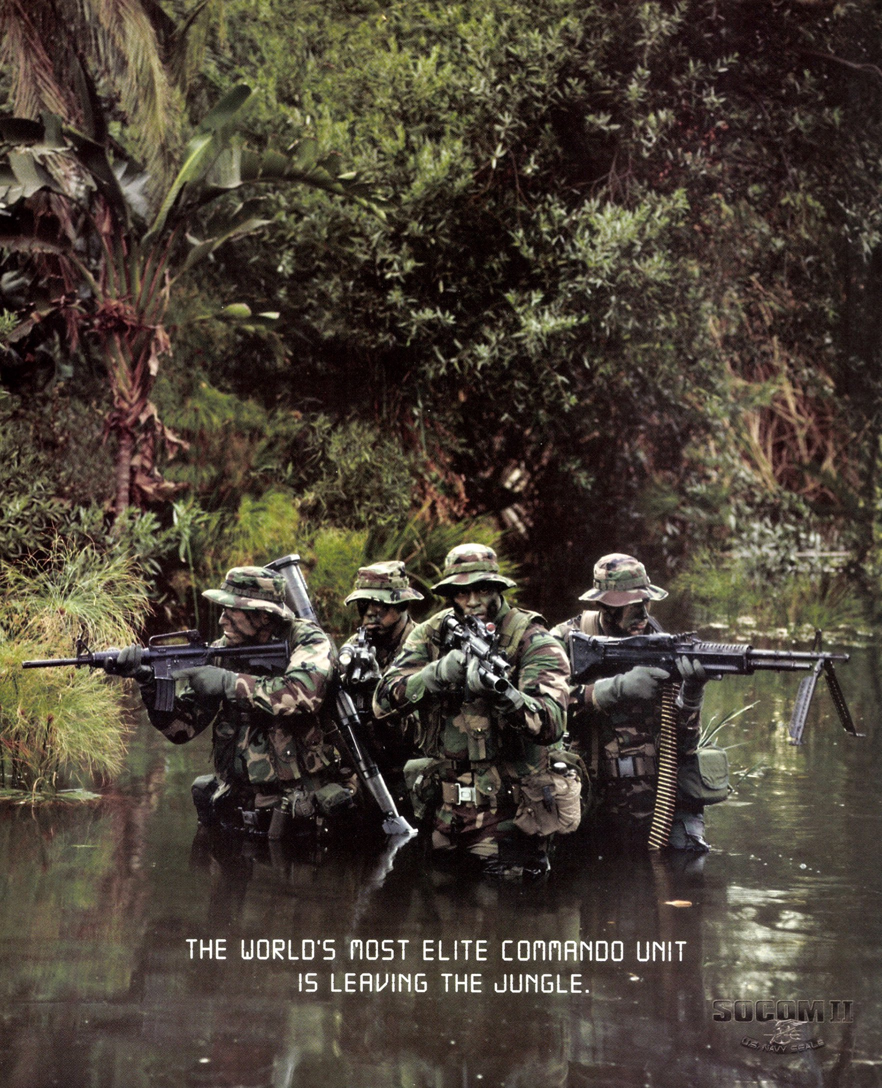
It has been brought to our attention that girls like to dance. Consequently, this game brings together two of our favorite things: videogames and the chance to encourage girls to dance around while playing them.

840
why'd you have to go and make things

3047
Like a vir- gin

### Karaoke Revolution

Some people need persuading to sing in front of friends, but once they do, they'll have a great time. It's all about having fun, so who cares if you miss every note? Even real rock stars like to play this game. See page 62.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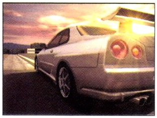
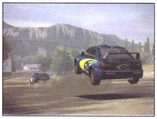
SOCOM II
U.S. NAVY SEALS

## ... PINCHES EVERY PENNY

ARTPLAYMI
ハドーケン





### Gran Turismo 3
Still the best all-around driving game on PS2, and now, you can pick it up really cheap because it's a greatest hit. It should keep any gearhead warmed up until *GT4* hits next year.

### Final Fantasy X
You get an awful lot of game for your $20 when you buy *FFX*. That's a dollar for every two and a half hours of play. Where else can you get value like that? Hmmm. Nope...we can't think of anything, either.

### Jak and Daxter
It's half the price of the sequel, and we actually think it's a better game. It's not as dark or edgy as *Jak II*, but it's a solid platformer with some really great graphics, and Daxter has his name featured in the title, just as he deserves.

### Ratchet & Clank
If you didn't play the original but the sequel has you interested, why not blow $20 on the original and bask in the knowledge that you own every *Ratchet* game ever made? It's a great mix of platformer, action game, and RPG. And it's full of big guns that do stupid stuff. Just the way we like 'em.

PS2 + GAMES = FUN!!

## ... THINKS BEFORE ACTING

### XenoSaga
Namco's epic certainly gives you plenty of time to think before you act. It also gives you time to put the kettle on, make a cup of tea, do the laundry, and take a nap. Nongamers refuse to believe it has hour-long cut-scenes. Believe, damn it! Believe!

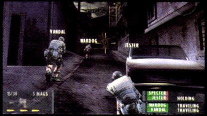
### Disgaea
One of the best (and only) tactical RPGs released this year, *Disgaea* also has the added advantages of an unusually spelled name and exploding penguins that accompany you on your travels.

### Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
Ubisoft's fabulous stealth-em-up arguably out-Metal Gears *Metal Gear* and has proven itself to be the thinking man's action game, with gorgeous graphics, a compelling story, and a tight-fitting rubber suit.

### Dynasty Tactics 2
It's like the *Dynasty Warriors* games without the wild and crazy fighting action. A tactical combat game that's even more enjoyable if you have facial hair to stroke while pondering your next move.

### Arc the Lad
One of the big RPG surprises of the year, this is the gift to get for those who really take their role-playing seriously. It has a great story, and visuals almost as good as those in the *Final Fantasy* games. It's arguably better than the old PS1 games, too. That's hardcore.

Step into the boots of a SEAL team in SOCOM II: U.S. NAVY SEALs and face the ultimate challenge: urban combat.



Developed in association with the U.S. Navy SEALs, SOCOM II is close-quarters combat at its most realistic. Invisible snipers lay in wait. Enemies lurk around every corner. And every civilian could be a friend or foe. Stealth is your greatest weapon.

2 MAGS
SPECTER
JESTER
FOLLOWING
WARDOG
VANDAL
ENGAGING

Wage urban war in single-player mode. Or go online and play with and against up to 16 total players. Either way, a SOCOM-compatible headset will help you communicate and work together as a team. Remember, together you stand. Divided you don't stand a chance.

Take the war on terror to the enemy on 12 intense international missions.
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MATURE 17+
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Blood
Violence

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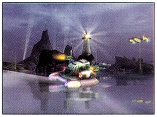
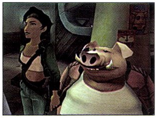
## ... WANTS TO GET LOST IN A GOOD STORY





### Beyond Good & Evil

The perfect game for anyone you know who complains about the inane nature of most action games. *BG&E* blends RPG and action-game elements with a genuinely compelling story.

### .hack (series)

By February of next year, the entire tetralogy will have been released, along with several anime DVDs and a manga series through Tokyopop. If you like your gaming mythos deep, it doesn't get more ambitious than this.

### The Getaway

Scripted like a London gangster movie and genuinely thrilling throughout, *The Getaway* is one of those games that film school graduates get excited about. We liked it because it didn't suck.

### Primal

Primal isn't for everybody, but even gamers who hate slow-paced adventure games might just wanna give this one a try if for no other reason than its intriguing gothic plot and heavy metal soundtrack.

## ... LIKES THINGS FAST AND FURIOUS

### Dynasty Warriors 4

Asian men in really, really bad hats running around impaling each other on long pointy sticks. If you like your fighting games to involve killing thousands of people and big, silly hats, then this is the game for you, without question.

### Midnight Club II

If you know someone who makes you nervous when they drive at night, don't buy them this game. It'll only make things worse...especially when they start trying to jump over buildings. It has a badass online mode too, in which everyone gets together to ignore the rules and just drag race. Cool!

### SSX 3

The best snowboarding game, ever. It's official—because we said so. Buy it for people who like snowboarding, or for those you've more than once heard use the word "gnarly" as an adjective.

### Need for Speed: Underground

If you know someone who drives a Subaru Impreza WRX or a Mitsubishi Evolution, just put this magazine down now and go out and buy them this game. They'll thank you for it.

### Zone of the Enders: 2nd Runner

This game is so fast, we don't think anyone actually knows what they're doing when they're playing it. It's all instinct—that or some kind of weird ESP connection or something. It also features some of the coolest-looking robots this side of Jupiter.

Active Mode

### FFX-2

Chances are, you've already read a thing or two about this game in this issue—there are only, like, a million pages or something devoted to it. What more do you want us to say? It's pretty good, OK? Plus, it features a bunch of girls who like to change their clothes a lot.

## ... WHO ARE STUCK IN THE PAST

### Prince of Persia

Few games look better, and our reviews editor is so hooked on it that he keeps going back to play it again and again even though he's beaten it twice. Older gamers will appreciate the historical significance, and girls will appreciate that the hero takes his shirt off about halfway through.

### Shinobi

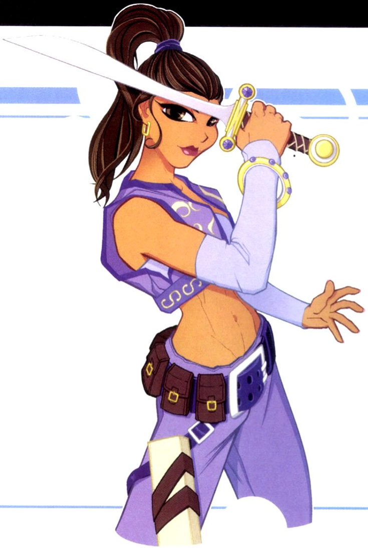
If you know someone with an unhealthy obsession with ninjas (it's surprising how many there are, see page 90) then Sega's retro remake is the gift for them. Wrap the game in a red silk scarf for added effect.

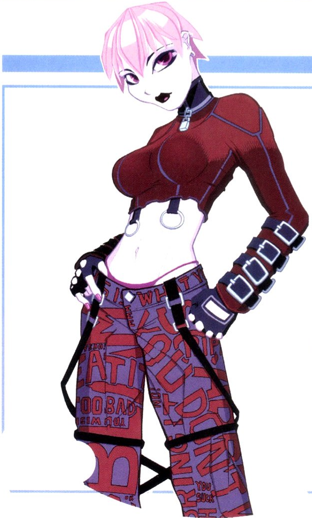
### Rygar: The Legendary Adventure

It's about a man in a leather skirt attacking things with a giant spiky yo-yo. If you can get past that, it's actually pretty awesome. Do you remember the original *Rygar*? Not many people do.

### Castlevania: Lament of Innocence

*Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* is one of PS1's best games, so if you know anyone who still won't shut up about that game, buy them this and keep them quiet for a couple of days. Great game, but the hero looks like a girl. Sorry, there's just no denying it.





## ... HAS A CRIMINAL INTENT

### Burnout 2: Point of Impact

All anyone ever wants is damage in car games, and *Burnout* very happily obliges people in this regard. It also lets them drive very fast on the wrong side of the road, and who doesn't want to do that?

### Hitman 2

Fans of the movie *The Professional* will get a kick out of *Hitman 2*—the eponymous hero is just as cool as Jean Reno. There's no Natalie Portman and no milk consumption, but there are *lots* of guns and lots of really icky murders with piano wire and stuff like that. Wow, we just said "icky."

### T.H.U.G.

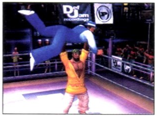
We wouldn't normally associate a skating game with criminal activity, but for some reason, *T.H.U.G.* lets you jack cars. Yeah, we aren't sure why, either. Fortunately, it's also the best skating game, and you can even build your own moves!

### Grand Theft Auto Double Pack

We defy you to find a PS2 owner who doesn't own one or both of the *GTA* games already, but if you know someone new to the system, you could do a lot worse than buying them the *GTA Double Pack*.

### Jak II

Jak and Daxter juice up on attitude, shoot stuff, and run away from the cops. It lacks the charm of the original game, but you do get plenty of challenge for your money. If you thought the original was too easy, this one will probably keep you busy for a while. We thought it was a bit tough, though.



### Def Jam: Vendetta

Hip-hop meets wrestling in the ultimate pop-culture crossover. It could've easily been lame, but EA Sports Big managed to suck up the Def Jam attitude and spit out an awesome brawler. Lots of celebrity contributions ensure that it has the right kinda vibe and plenty of cool tunes.

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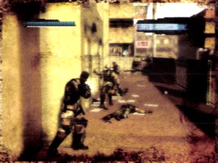

Objects are your only allies. Cover is your only saving grace.

TEEN T Strong Language Violence CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

XBOX

PlayStation®2

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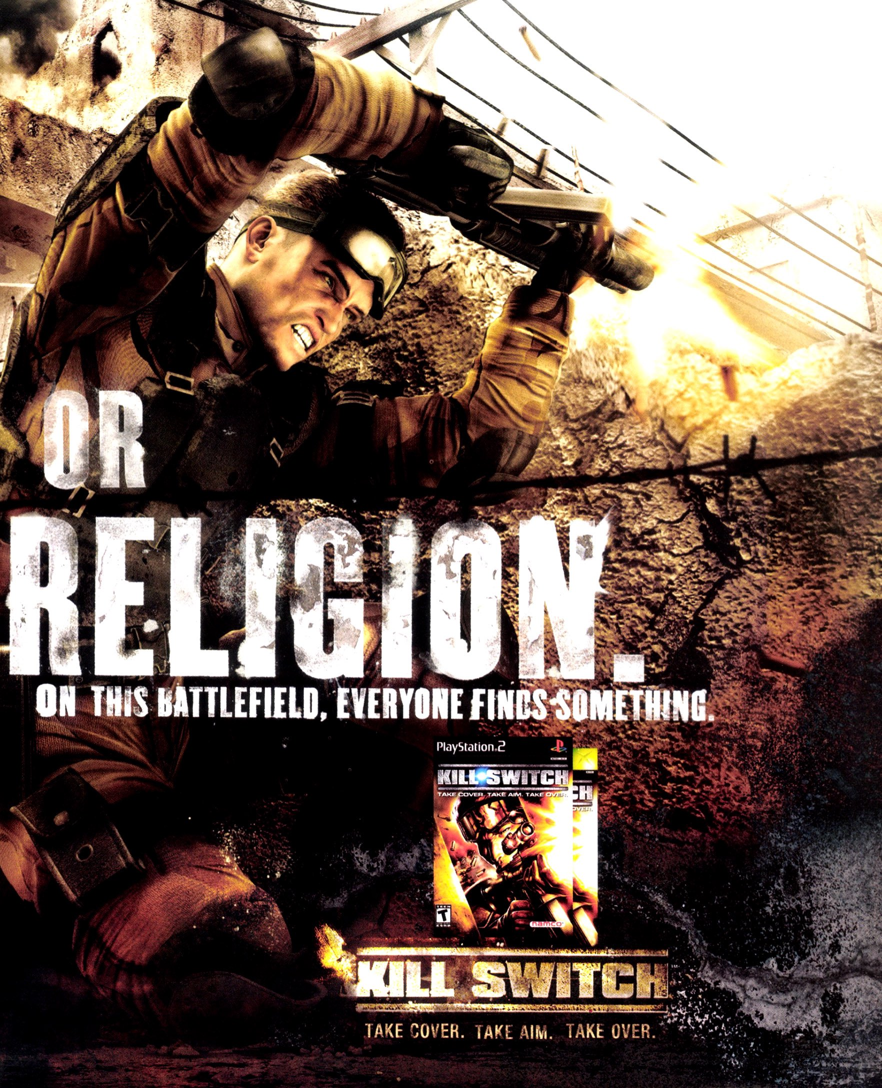
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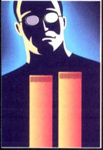
ON THIS BATTLEFIELD, EVERYONE FINDS SOMETHING.
PlayStation 2
KILL SWITCH
TAKE COVER. TAKE AIM. TAKE OVER.
T
namco
KILL SWITCH
TAKE COVER. TAKE AIM. TAKE OVER.

**Tekken A Break**
*Tekken*'s Nina is taking a vacation from the fighting-game series to star in her own action game. Basic attacks can be executed using either of the two analog sticks, but Nina also has a special attack called Internal Destruction.

## THE WATCHDOG

### CURRENT EVENTS



A videogame about 9/11: tasteless, or a way to bring home the event to a generation of gamers?

This is a topic I've been thinking about since I first heard about it earlier in the year. The story goes like this: Three UCSD students built a 9/11 mod of *Unreal Tournament* for a class. In the mod, players spawn on a floor of the World Trade Center on 9/11. There's no guarantee they'll find an escape route, so they might die in a fire or from the building collapsing on them. Or, when it's clear there's no escape, they might choose the option that many have chosen in the real world—leaping from the building.

On the surface, it sounds like these kids have no comprehension of the tastelessness of their actions. But in an article in the *New York Times* in September, the mod's makers argued the point that building the mod was taking a critical historical event and translating it into a format gamers could understand. "The more I delved into it, the more personal it became," one of them said.

I don't like the idea of the mod, but I can't deny there might be something to the rationale behind it. A while back, I argued that having students try their hand at the D-Day level of *Medal of Honor* (in which one is certain to die several times before making it to the beach) could give today's kids an inkling of what the soldiers storming Normandy had to live though—or die in. It's difficult to imagine anyone needing a reminder of the visceral horror of 9/11, but maybe some people do. Or, as time goes on, maybe they will.

Part of the controversy is simply due to the format of videogames themselves. In the wake of 9/11, stories, music, and artwork poured out of the nation's creative class, and very little of that was accused of being tasteless. But videogames are obviously interactive, and most are not, to put it mildly, especially deep. The assumption is that videogames are simply games, and some events are too important to be played with a controller or mouse and keyboard. But there is no reason a videogame can't be more than a game as well.

I'm particularly struck by the fact that in the 9/11 mod, it's not always possible to find a safe exit. Given that every videogame is designed with a solution, the kids (and others) playing the mod might think it's totally unfair that no matter what they do, their onscreen character is going to die. In that respect—in the randomness and the unfairness of living and dying on 9/11—this mod hits on the truth of the event. And that's a lesson to be learned.

**Can and should videogames replicate recent historical events like 9/11? Give John your thoughts on the matter at the *OPM* message boards on www.1Up.com or through e-mail at john@scalzi.com.**

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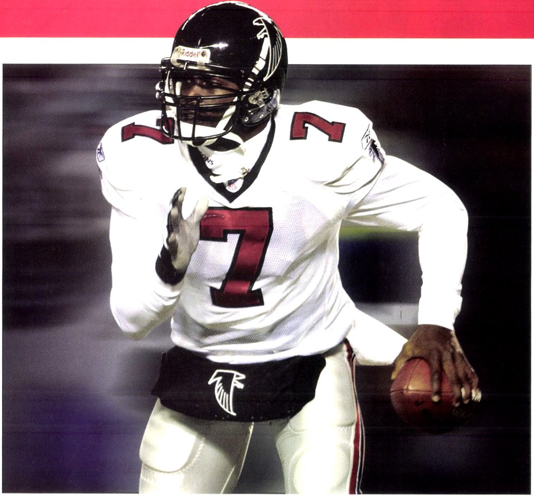

Photo by Getty Images

# GOING FOR THE WIN

## EA Sports launches a new online service for its games, but how does it stack up against the competition?

Never content with taking a backseat, EA Sports has officially unveiled EA Sports Nation (www.easportsnation.com) for PS2, an online service that complements features integrated into the company's 2004 lineup of sports games. More importantly for EA, the service reinforces its commitment to building large communities around its already hugely successful sports properties. But the similarities between EA Sports Nation, Microsoft's XSN, and Sega's ESPN Videogames site make it seem like the company is desperately playing catch up. EA says that isn't the case.

> **EA Sports has included voice communication, chat lobbies, tournaments, rosters, programs that target cheaters, and more.**

"Last year, we built the online connectivity feature into our first few sports titles and the response from gamers was overwhelming. Just under 500,000 players registered to compete on *Madden NFL 2003* and *NBA Live 2003* online through the PlayStation 2," says Erik Whiteford, director of the EA Sports brand. "EA's got the No. 1 market share on the No. 1 console—the only pressure on us comes from the players. No one else comes close. The only pressure on us is from the players who want a better experience."

So, what can you do at the site? For starters, you can do some serious scouting on opponents in any of the 2004 games by reading up on the wealth of statistics available. You can also find out when tournaments are being held, or just read some general news. But in-game, EA Sports has included plenty of features, including voice communication, chat lobbies, tournaments, rosters, programs that target cheaters, and more.

It's interesting that Web integration has become a prevalent theme in sports games; since they tend to reach much wider audiences, they present the perfect opportunity for developers to try to increase the community aspect. "Web integration for PS2 online games provides a huge value-add to the game via increased access, information, and enhanced personalization. Players can't always be in front of their consoles, so Web interactivity gives them the opportunity to always be 'on' in the community and interact in the community in new and enhanced ways," says Whiteford. "It truly brings the online community to life and makes it more pervasive."

This is all just the start of the service. EA plans to integrate EA Sports Big games into EA Sports Nation, as well as possibly bring the service to other platforms, including Sony's upcoming handheld. "We want to lock down the core experience on PS2 before we start discussing other platforms," Whiteford adds. "But the PSP sounds *very* interesting."

Of course, the issue of paying for EA Sports Nation has already come up—running online games tends to cost quite a bit of money—but EA will wait to see if enough people value the service enough that they'd be willing to pay for it.

**SAM CHAMPION**
Perfect name for a videogame character? You betcha! Too bad it's already taken by a local N.Y. weatherman.

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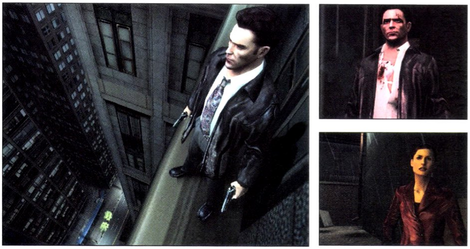

# FEEL THE PAYNE

## Max is back to deal out a second helping of Payne

Take-Two Interactive has announced that the PS2 version of *Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne* is scheduled for a Dec. 2 release. The stylized third-person shooter from Remedy once again follows the adventures of cop-turned-renegade Max Payne. The sequel's story features a much older and wiser Max pursuing a love interest as he fights the criminal element of New York City. Expect the same sort of graphic-novel-style storytelling present in the original game, as well as the same intense gun fights. However, the sequel features some drastic improvements, including a revamped graphics engine and a new type of gameplay that'll have Max rolling with a crew of characters—just to name a few.

# PIT STOP

## Gran Turismo 4 hits a speed bump

Sorry, race fans, but SCEA and Polyphony Digital have decided to hit the brakes on the North American release date for *Gran Turismo 4*. Neither company gave any specific reason for the delay; they simply changed the release date from this winter to sometime in 2004. Japan will get a demo disc of sorts, called *Gran Turismo 4 Prologue*, which will have one course and one license, as well as a Time-attack mode, but chances of it coming over here are pretty slim.

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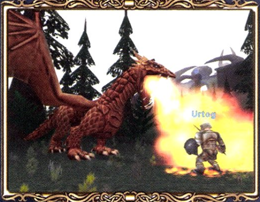
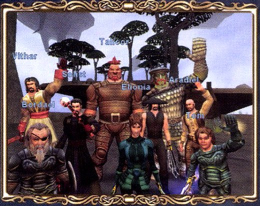


Battle fierce dragons with a new playable race, the Ogre


Vithar
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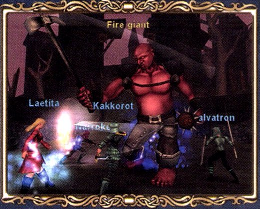
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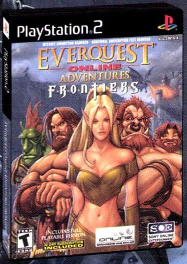
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R.E.M./Hoobastank/Barenaked Ladies Photos by Getty Images Gin Blossoms Photo by Bruce Racine

# battle of the bands

by Chris Baker

## R.E.M., Hoobastank, Barenaked Ladies, and Gin Blossoms join the Karaoke Revolution

We can't sing. We're willing to bet that you can't, either. Oddly enough, though, we can't get enough of *Karaoke Revolution*. Via the USB headset used in games like *SOCOM*, Konami's new music game awards you points for accurate pitch and rhythm as you sing along to more than 35 chart-toppers of the past few decades. ■■■ Our love for the game makes us wonder: What do well-known bands, those whose voices you'd actually *want* to hear, think of the game? We recruited members of R.E.M., Hoobastank, Gin Blossoms, and Barenaked Ladies—each of whom has a song in *Karaoke Revolution*—to answer that very question. ■■■ And to make things even more interesting, we turned it into a competition. In fact, it's a veritable...

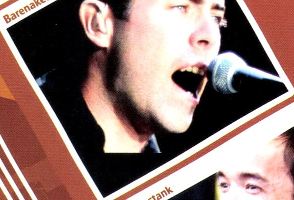
### THE CONTEST RULES

Each group is scored on two songs: first their own, then a second of their choice. The winner is determined when the two scores are added together. Simple, huh?

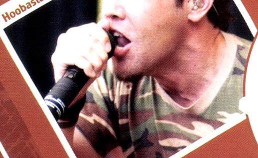
Here, within the group's Tempe, AZ, studio, Gin Blossoms drummer Scott Kusmirek roots on singer Robin Wilson as he karaokes to his band's own song in *Karaoke Revolution*.

**Gin Blossoms**

**R.E.M.**



**Barenaked Ladies**



**Hoobastank**

**Leonard Bernstein!**

**OVERHEARD**

"You're right. You're not a good singer."
—Michael Stipe tells it like it is to *OPM*'s Chris Baker

Both Michael Stipe (singing) and Mike Mills (on couch, legs crossed) would award four stars to *Karaoke Revolution* on the *OPM* scale.

## R.E.M.

You'd think a band used to selling out arenas for the better part of the past two decades would feel most at home at *Karaoke Revolution*'s Royal Hall, or even its Enormo Bowl. But, "I'm OK in the subway," R.E.M. frontman Michael Stipe tells us in reference to the game's Central Station. "I like that I can sing in a subway."

After viewing a stirring rendition of "Believe" by bassist Mike Mills ("I was channeling Cher"), Stipe says, "It seems like the choruses are the easy part, because everybody knows that. And then the melodies are really locked in, and the verses are a bit harder."

Speaking of hard verses, keeping up with the lightning-fast words to "It's the End of the World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" is next to hopeless for the normal *Karaoke Revolution* player. Stipe makes it look easy—although, in watching him perform, one can tell he's not too concerned about singing how the game *wants* him to. He's singing just as he will to end the band's concert later this very evening. The end result: 10,964 points. A fine total, but one that certainly deserves to be higher.

Though he may have strayed from the game's second-by-second instruction, that doesn't necessarily mean Stipe could care less about how he's judged. "Halfway through, you're panicking because you're not doing very well," he comments. "I like the crowd reactions to bad notes."

"LOUSY!" laughs Mills. "I think this game is hilarious. I think it's lots of fun. I know a lot of people in my family who don't necessarily play videogames, but they love to sing karaoke. So I'll be getting this for my aunt."

Stipe says "the state of the world—and Bob Dylan" inspired "End of the World." Could he have even fathomed it would become a big draw in a videogame more than 15 years later? Mills can only laugh at the suggestion, but Stipe delivers the perfect straight-faced answer: "I was praying for it...almost nightly." ■ ■ ■

### HOW THEY SCORED

**Song 1: "It's the End of the World As We Know It"**
**Singer: Michael Stipe**
**Score: 10,964**
**Song 2: "Believe"**
**Singer: Mike Mills**
**Score: 12,093**

**TOTAL SCORE: 23,057**

## HOOBASTANK

"F— you, Kansas!"

Hoobastank's Chris Hesse has just had his first trial run with *Karaoke Revolution*, doing his best to keep in tune with the L.A. band's huge 2001 hit, "Crawling in the Dark." "That's why I play drums," he says, after getting booed offstage at the County Fair.

"That's exactly what I expected," adds lead singer Doug Robb, laughing at his bandmate's pathetic 1,664 points. "If they had, like, *Karaoke Drumming*, you should give that a chance. You know what would be really cool is if we went to a real karaoke bar and had me, like, totally *butcher* the song."

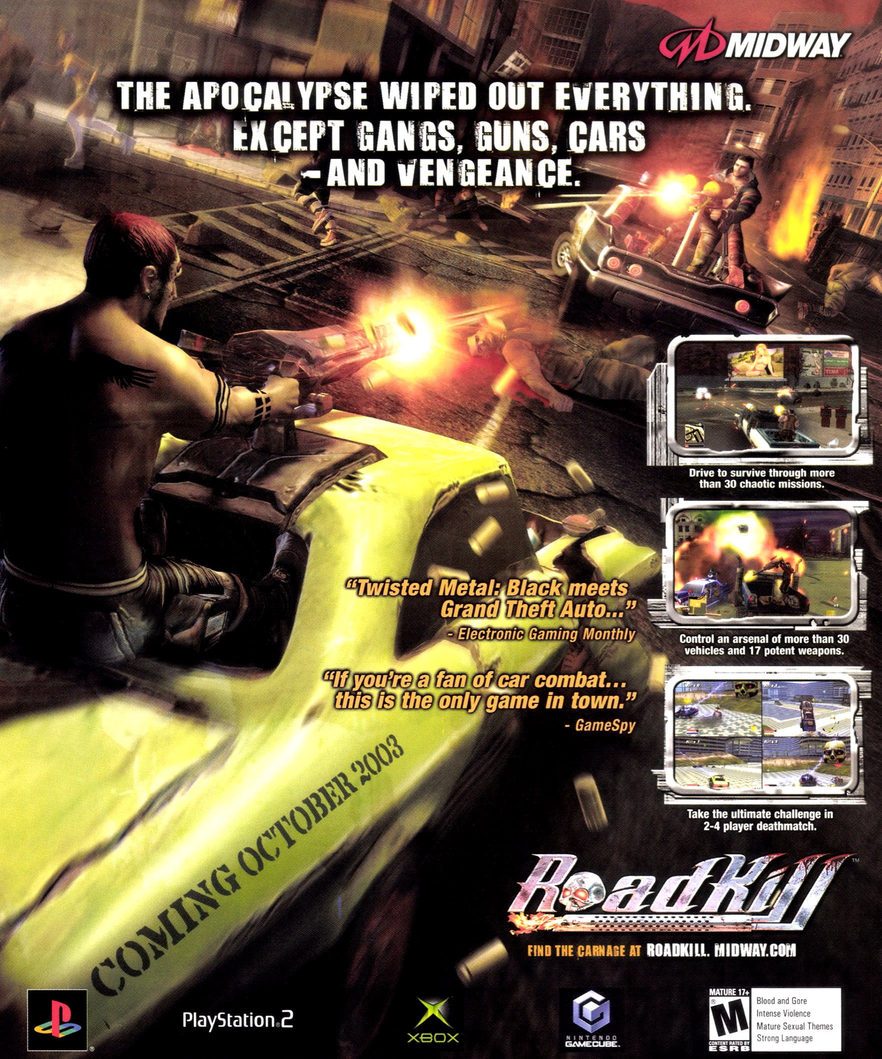
When it's Robb's turn to perform the song he wrote to express "everybody's normal feelings of self-doubt," he certainly doesn't butcher the tune—it sounds great to us. The game doesn't think quite as much of his performance, though, awarding a mediocre 8,831 points in the end. As Robb surmises, you have to "remember exactly how you sang on the record, because that's what the game's basing it on."

"The game is awesome," comments Hesse. "I probably wouldn't sit at home and play by myself, but it'd be a lot of fun for a party or something like that."

"My girlfriend doesn't play games at all, and she'd really crack up at it," says Robb, a gamer whose personally created DeVry Institute now tops the polls in *NCAA Football 2004*. "It has nothing to do with videogames—it has its

Hoobastank singer Doug Robb (left) crawls in the dark as percussionist Chris Hesse plays the air drums.

Hoobastank Photo by Joe Toreno; R.E.M. Photos by Michael Sexton



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I hope the Smoking Man's in this one.

## WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

The term "gin blossoms" is slang for damaged nasal capillaries caused by excessive drinking.

own element. It's like a combination between karaoke and *Dance Dance Revolution*."

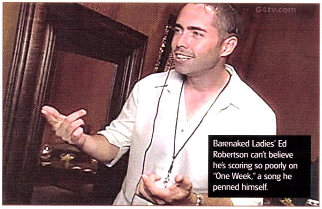
Robb isn't convinced the package is everything it could be, though. "I feel like you can probably go through the songs pretty fast," he says. "Expansion packs would be good—it seems like you'd be able to dump a boatload of songs on them. I think Metallica songs would be funny—anything off *...And Justice for All*."

"And the Bee Gees, too!" enthuses Hesse. "I love the Bee Gees!"

Hoobastank's next album drops on December 9, but it remains nameless as of press time. However, this experience just might have offered some inspiration to Robb: "It should be *Hoobastank Revolution*!" ■ ■ ■

### HOW THEY SCORED

**Song 1: "Crawling in the Dark"**
**Singer: Doug Robb**
**Score: 8,831**
**Song 2: "You Really Got Me"**
**Singers: Doug Robb/Chris Hesse**
**Score: 8,408**
**TOTAL SCORE: 17,239**



Barenaked Ladies' Ed Robertson can't believe he's scoring so poorly on "One Week," a song he penned himself.

## BARENAKED LADIES

Midway through his performance of "One Week," Barenaked Ladies co-vocalist Ed Robertson displays an odd mix of amusement and disbelief. "Steve sings this part!" he proclaims, as the screen reads POOR during the track's non-rap-style lyrics. Unfortunately, things don't improve by the time you think you're lookin' at Aquaman.

"LOUSY?!?!"

By the end of the admittedly tough song (one of a handful you actually need to unlock in *Karaoke Revolution*), having earned a measly 4,955 points, Robertson is fully expectant of the friendly taunts headed his way. "The thing about karaoke," jokes videogame network G4's Tom Russo (who kindly contributed the picture of Robertson you see here), "is *anyone* can be a star."

"I thought I knew that song pretty well, having *written* it and performed it hundreds of times," says a smiling Robertson. "I'm better at *PaRappa* than I am at this."

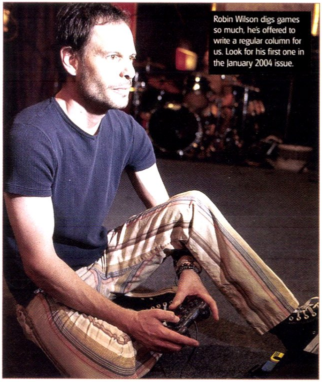
Despite the happy facade, one can sense the need for redemption—and "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" is just what the doctor ordered. So what if Cyndi Lauper didn't actually sing "Oh, Captain Lou, you know you're still number one," as Robertson does? It's only pitch and rhythm that count in this game, and he's aware of this. By song's end, he has amassed a very respectable 10,675 points.

"I'm very alarmed by the fact that I performed Cyndi Lauper better than I performed Ed Robertson," says the Toronto native. "I'm actually quite sexually confused about that right now. I might need a little time to work that out.

"It's very exciting to know that there are videogame geeks out there who will perform my own song better than I will," continues Robertson, who doesn't hit the road without his PS2 and as many as 50 games. "But the game is very cool. It's going to make people happy. Just be prepared to get your ass kicked." ■ ■ ■

### HOW THEY SCORED

**Song 1: "One Week"**
**Singer: Ed Robertson**
**Score: 4,955**
**Song 2: "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun"**
**Score: 10,675**
**TOTAL SCORE: 15,630**



Robin Wilson digs games so much, he's offered to write a regular column for us. Look for his first one in the January 2004 issue.

## GIN BLOSSOMS

It takes a lot to break Robin Wilson away from *Soul Calibur II* or *War of the Monsters*. Self-proclaimed as "one of the most geeked-out gamers in rock," the Gin Blossoms lead vocalist is, however, absolutely psyched to boot up *Karaoke Revolution*.

Before even bothering to shuffle through all of the songs, Wilson takes on the ones he likes—"Bizarre Love Triangle," "Like a Virgin," "Red, Red Wine," etc.—the moment he sees them on the list. It's as though he could care less that "Hey Jealousy" is among the many selections.

Eventually, the time arrives for Wilson to perform his band's 1994 megahit. "Jesus!" he exclaims, hearing a sample of the cover version included in the game. (Like everyone else, he is, in a sense, covering a remake of his own song. Konami rerecorded every selection to minimize licensing fees.) Once the initial shock passes, Wilson's ready to go. With a gamer's mentality throughout the entire song, he follows the pitch-indicating arrow note for note, ending up with an awesome 27,292 points—far and away the best of any member of the four bands.

"It was a lot of fun trying to keep up with myself," says Wilson, just after his success. "The game sticks very anally to the delivery of the lyrics. And the fact is, I don't sing the song that way—I never did—so it's strange to have to sing so technically and to put in all the little lyrical inflections that in rock 'n' roll you'd normally skip over.

"It's unlike any other game I've ever played," he tells us. "This is exactly the type of game that can bring in nongamers, because it's not a traditional videogame. There's no punching. There's no stealing cars. No jumping. If the last videogame you played was *Joust*, this might be something that kind of gets you into the next generation of consoles."

The selection of songs can only help matters. "There's a lot of classic tunes in there," comments Wilson, whose score on "It's the End of the World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" surpasses Michael Stipe's. "I would like to see, like, an '80s expansion pack that includes stuff like the Replacements and the Pixies. Something with some edge."

A loyal *OPM* reader himself, Wilson knows exactly how he'd rate the game if he were a member of our staff. "I would give it 4 out of 5 stars," he says. "It would have gotten a 5 if the singer didn't sound so much like me." ■ ■ ■

1ST PLACE

### HOW THEY SCORED

**Song 1: "Hey Jealousy"**
**Singer: Robin Wilson**
**Score: 27,634**
**Song 2: "It's the End of the World As We Know It"**
**Score: 22,196**
**TOTAL SCORE: 49,830**

## Robin Wilson: Hardcore Gamer

**What was your first gaming experience?**
It was either *Pong* or some *Star Trek* game that some kids at Arizona State put together. It was essentially *Battleship* with X's and O's on a computer screen. And then I worked at a place called Golf and Games in 1983, so it was right at the height of popularity of games like *Donkey Kong* and *Pac-Man*. Things like *Tron* and *Robotron* and *Joust*.

**Those were your favorites?**
Yeah. *Centipede*, *Asteroids*, *Space Invaders*. I'm looking to get a tattoo with the little space guys going around my arm. Some people have barbed wire—I'm gonna get a chain of Space Invaders.

**What got you hooked?**
*Donkey Kong*, because not only was it a fun game to play, but also there was a sense of some kind of a story behind it. There really *wasn't*, but I can sort of sense that there was.

**How do see gaming now compared to back then?**
I couldn't possibly have imagined it. For me, the real turning point in gaming was *Tomb Raider*. As far as I'm concerned, it reinvented console gaming with the 3D environments.

**So, what did you think of *The Angel of Darkness*?**
I am *super* pissed about that one. I have no intention of trying another Lara Croft game again, ever. They're gonna have to give me a two-level demo on the *OPM* demo disc, and it's gonna have to blow me away.

**How important do you think good music is for games?**
It's not as important as gameplay, graphics, control, and camera. Music is secondary to all those things.

**Would you say the *Vice City* soundtrack is the best?**
Far and away. I mean, who would argue with that? The guy who composed *.hack*?

*Read this entire interview at playstationmagazine.com.*

Barenaked Ladies Photo by G4 Media, Gin Blossoms Photos by Bruce Racine

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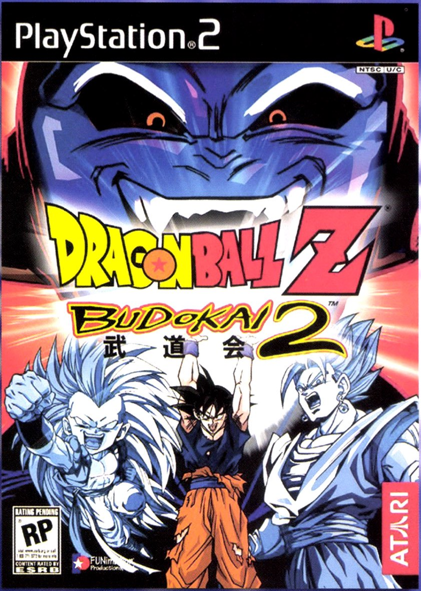
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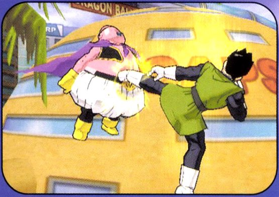

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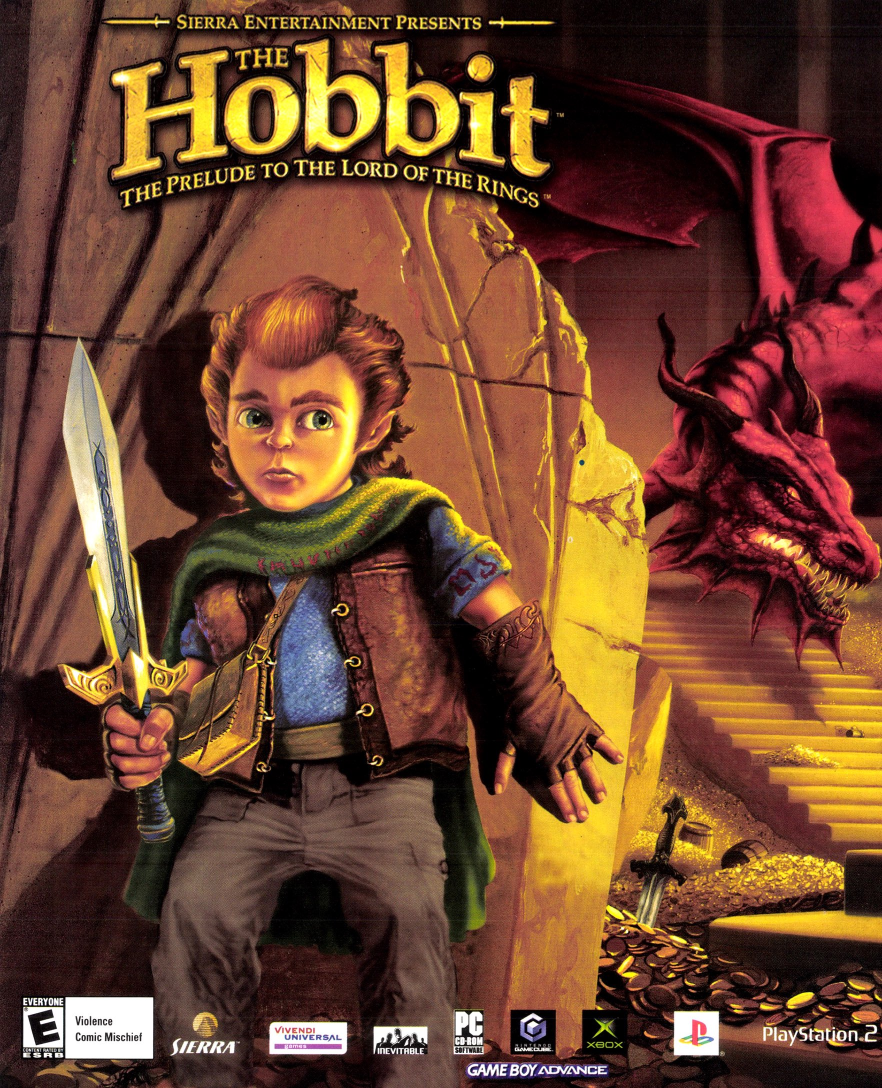
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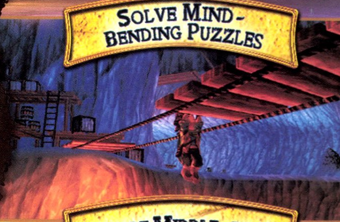

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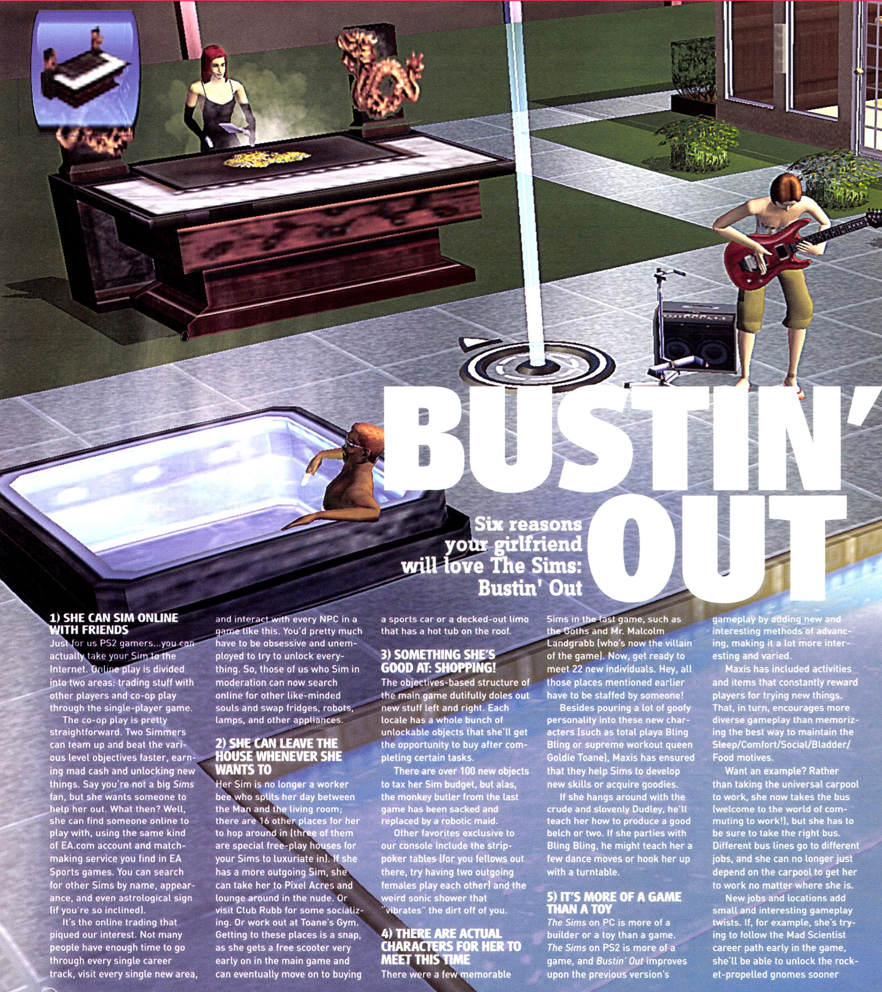


# BUSTIN' OUT

## Six reasons your girlfriend will love The Sims: Bustin' Out

### 1) SHE CAN SIM ONLINE WITH FRIENDS

Just for us PS2 gamers...you can actually take your Sim to the Internet. Online play is divided into two areas: trading stuff with other players and co-op play through the single-player game.

The co-op play is pretty straightforward. Two Simmers can team up and beat the various level objectives faster, earning mad cash and unlocking new things. Say you're not a big *Sims* fan, but she wants someone to help her out. What then? Well, she can find someone online to play with, using the same kind of EA.com account and matchmaking service you find in EA Sports games. You can search for other Sims by name, appearance, and even astrological sign (if you're so inclined).

It's the online trading that piqued our interest. Not many people have enough time to go through every single career track, visit every single new area, and interact with every NPC in a game like this. You'd pretty much have to be obsessive and unemployed to try to unlock everything. So, those of us who Sim in moderation can now search online for other like-minded souls and swap fridges, robots, lamps, and other appliances.

### 2) SHE CAN LEAVE THE HOUSE WHENEVER SHE WANTS TO

Her Sim is no longer a worker bee who splits her day between the Man and the living room; there are 16 other places for her to hop around in (three of them are special free-play houses for your Sims to luxuriate in). If she has a more outgoing Sim, she can take her to Pixel Acres and lounge around in the nude. Or visit Club Rubb for some socializing. Or work out at Toane's Gym. Getting to these places is a snap, as she gets a free scooter very early on in the main game and can eventually move on to buying a sports car or a decked-out limo that has a hot tub on the roof.

### 3) SOMETHING SHE'S GOOD AT: SHOPPING!

The objectives-based structure of the main game dutifully doles out new stuff left and right. Each locale has a whole bunch of unlockable objects that she'll get the opportunity to buy after completing certain tasks.

There are over 100 new objects to tax her Sim budget, but alas, the monkey butler from the last game has been sacked and replaced by a robotic maid.

Other favorites exclusive to our console include the strip-poker tables (for you fellows out there, try having two outgoing females play each other) and the weird sonic shower that "vibrates" the dirt off of you.

### 4) THERE ARE ACTUAL CHARACTERS FOR HER TO MEET THIS TIME

There were a few memorable Sims in the last game, such as the Goths and Mr. Malcolm Landgrabb (who's now the villain of the game). Now, get ready to meet 22 new individuals. Hey, all those places mentioned earlier have to be staffed by someone!

Besides pouring a lot of goofy personality into these new characters (such as total playa Bling Bling or supreme workout queen Goldie Toane), Maxis has ensured that they help Sims to develop new skills or acquire goodies.

If she hangs around with the crude and slovenly Dudley, he'll teach her how to produce a good belch or two. If she parties with Bling Bling, he might teach her a few dance moves or hook her up with a turntable.

### 5) IT'S MORE OF A GAME THAN A TOY

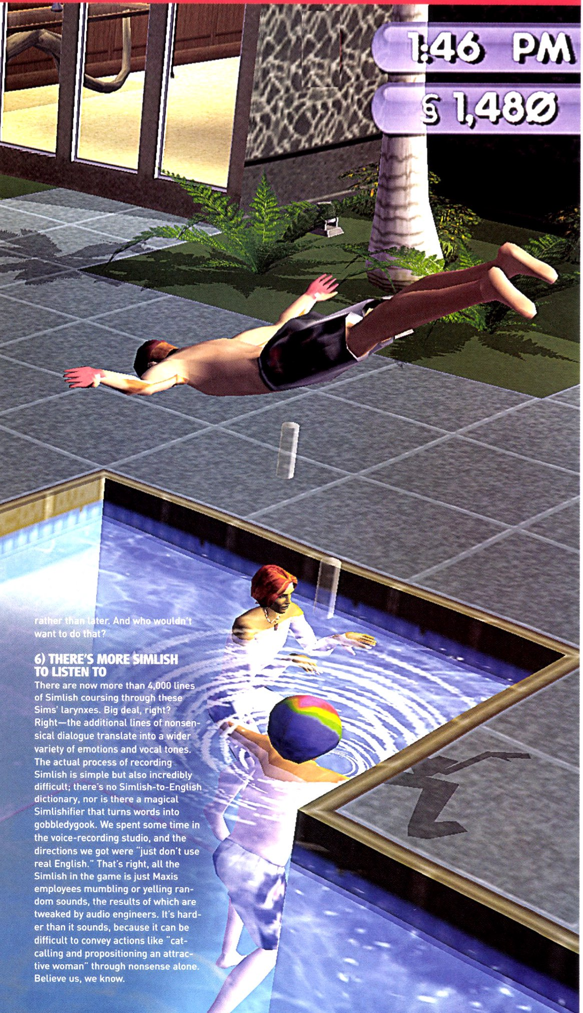
*The Sims* on PC is more of a builder or a toy than a game. *The Sims* on PS2 is more of a game, and *Bustin' Out* improves upon the previous version's gameplay by adding new and interesting methods of advancing, making it a lot more interesting and varied.

Maxis has included activities and items that constantly reward players for trying new things. That, in turn, encourages more diverse gameplay than memorizing the best way to maintain the Sleep/Comfort/Social/Bladder/Food motives.

Want an example? Rather than taking the universal carpool to work, she now takes the bus (welcome to the world of commuting to work!), but she has to be sure to take the right bus. Different bus lines go to different jobs, and she can no longer just depend on the carpool to get her to work no matter where she is.

New jobs and locations add small and interesting gameplay twists. If, for example, she's trying to follow the Mad Scientist career path early in the game, she'll be able to unlock the rocket-propelled gnomes sooner

**BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE**
Though you start the game in your mom's house, there's no relation to that cinematic delight starring Martin Lawrence under heavy—and we mean heavy—makeup as Big Momma.



rather than later. And who wouldn't want to do that?

### 6) THERE'S MORE SIMLISH TO LISTEN TO

There are now more than 4,000 lines of Simlish coursing through these Sims' larynxes. Big deal, right? Right—the additional lines of nonsensical dialogue translate into a wider variety of emotions and vocal tones. The actual process of recording Simlish is simple but also incredibly difficult; there's no Simlish-to-English dictionary, nor is there a magical Simlishifier that turns words into gobbledygook. We spent some time in the voice-recording studio, and the directions we got were "just don't use real English." That's right, all the Simlish in the game is just Maxis employees mumbling or yelling random sounds, the results of which are tweaked by audio engineers. It's harder than it sounds, because it can be difficult to convey actions like "catcalling and propositioning an attractive woman" through nonsense alone. Believe us, we know.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**
*The Sims* was inspired by the work of Christopher Alexander, a Professor Emeritus at UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design.

# ARCHITECT

**"I view the console versions of *The Sims* as experiments in cross-breeding, to some degree..."**

Will Wright may not be the hands-on go-to guy for *The Sims: Bustin' Out*, but there's no denying he's the grand visionary at Maxis. Employees often refer to him as the man behind the curtain, ensuring everything *Sim*-related runs smoothly. Making a name for himself with *SimCity*, Wright eventually went on to create the ultimate crossover game: *The Sims* (heck, even chicks dig it!). Even though he's working on his next überproject, he still has time to lend his brain to *Sims: Bustin' Out*.

**Is there a unifying philosophy behind the entire (PC and console) *Sims* franchise?**
If there is a unifying concept, I think it would be that we want players to own the world as much as possible.

**What kind of thinking went into the two different directions of the PC and console versions of *The Sims*?**
The first differences had to do with the players and the environment. Console players tend to be younger and are playing in a more social environment. Frequently, there are spectators watching over your shoulder as you play, and this influences how you relate to a game. I view the console versions of *The Sims* as experiments in cross-breeding, to some degree; we're trying to combine elements of the PC gameplay with other, more goal-directed and level-based games.

**How do you think the online experience of *Bustin' Out* on the PS2 will compare with the ill-fated *The Sims Online*?**
They are totally different beasts. One is about developing long-term relationships and achievement (*The Sims Online*), the other (*Bustin' Out*) is about playing together to unlock cool new objects and explore new locations.

**How do you make your games so appealing to everyone, even the elusive female market?**
Part of the trick here is to get more females involved in the development process. At Maxis, we've been lucky to recruit a high percentage of women onto our development teams. There is something of a chicken-and-egg problem to solve here. One of the reasons we attract more qualified women is because we are making the types of games they like to play, which then helps us to make just those types of games better.

**From where do you draw all of your ideas?**
Most of the ideas I bring to games come from books I read. I read mostly nonfiction—science, sociology, biology—and find that many of the subjects I research are very compelling to me. I always feel a need to find ways to communicate these ideas to a wider audience.

**Are there any other game designers you admire, and if so, why?**
Yes, I have the utmost respect for Miyamoto-san of Nintendo; I love all of his games, and his craftsmanship is superb. I enjoy Sid Meier's games because he designs from the player's point of view. I like Peter Molyneux's games for their creativity and the detail he puts into his little worlds.

**How did you get into the industry?**
I bought my first computer to control robots that I was building at the time. After teaching myself to program, I found myself becoming more and more fascinated with the possibilities. I bought some of the first games at the time—the ones that came in Zip-lock bags—and became totally hooked on the idea of building these microworlds.

**Describe the ideal game you'd love to make.**
Well, I've been working on it in the background for a few years now. Ask me again in a year when I can talk about it.

**What would you be doing if you weren't making games?**
Probably making toys. Or perhaps making robots.

**If you could go back and remake any one of your past titles, which one would it be and why?**
I think I might remake *SimAnt* from a more immersive first-person point of view.

**Do you have any advice for aspiring game designers?**
Expose yourself to ideas, subjects, and design approaches from outside the games industry. There's a world of useful stuff out there for you to discover, and by pulling from outside sources, you'll contribute to broadening games rather than inbreeding them.

SimAnt(tm) 1991 Maxis

**Will Wright**
**Social Engineer, Maxis**
**Career Highlights: *SimCity, SimAnt, SimCity 4, The Sims***

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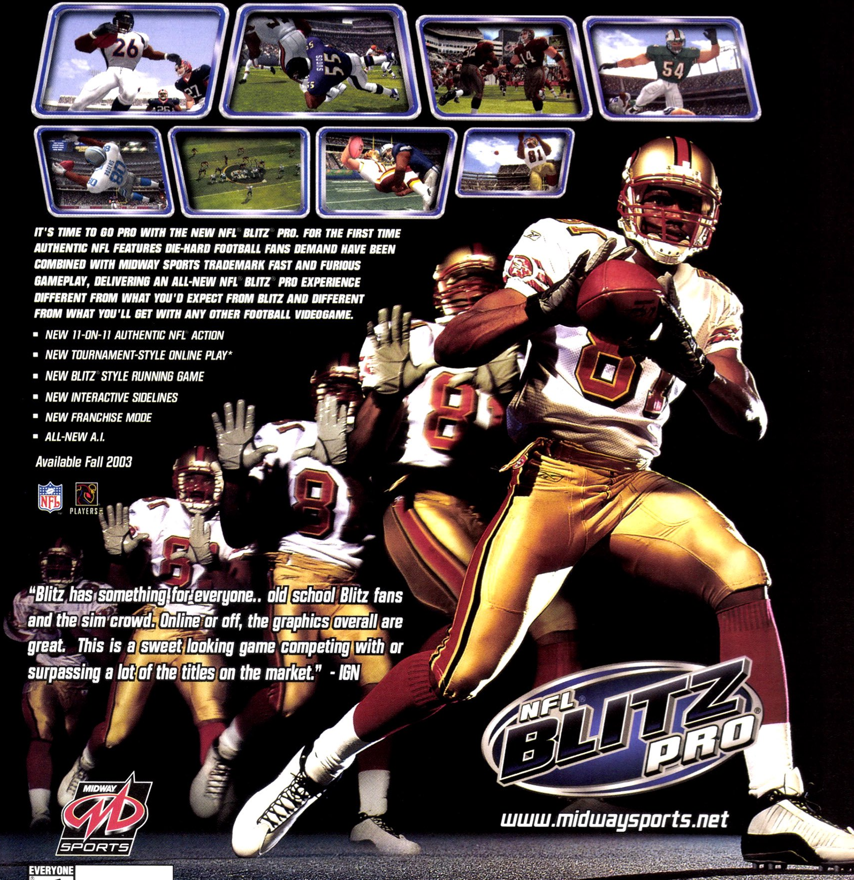

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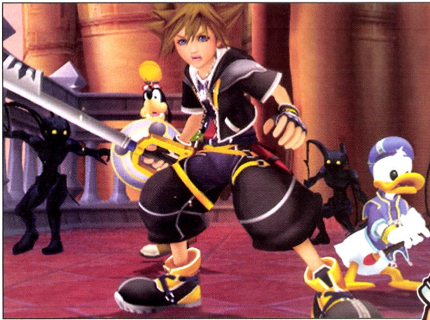
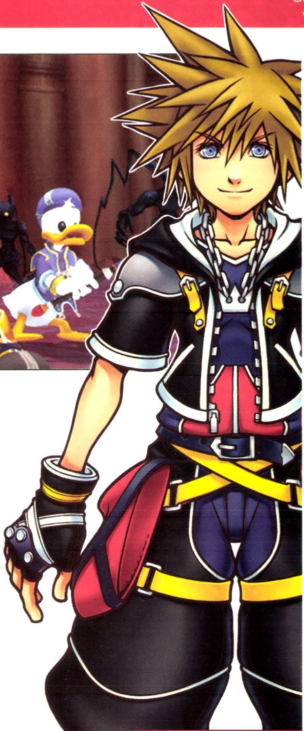




# WHY? BECAUSE SQUENIX LIKES YOU!

## Kingdom Hearts sequel gets the go-ahead at this year's TGS

Despite the fact that a trailer for the game was included in the international version of *Kingdom Hearts*, Square Enix repeatedly sidestepped questions about a *Kingdom Hearts* sequel, mainly because of complicated negotiations with Disney. But at this year's Tokyo Game Show, the company officially took the wraps off the game and even showed some video of the Disney and Square Enix crossover in action. "We have to deliver new products from the *Kingdom Hearts* world," said Square Enix President Yoichi Wada. "The original game sold 1.3 million units in Japan and 2 million overseas, so there's evidence of great support for *Kingdom Hearts*."

Set shortly after the original, *Kingdom Hearts II* features the return of Sora, Kairi, Riku, and numerous Disney characters, including a version of Mickey Mouse that looks as though it was ripped straight from *The Matrix*. Although Tetsuya Nomura, director and character designer, helped shape Mickey's new look, Disney still maintains an active role in the appearance of its characters. "Our legacy of keeping Disney characters alive involves making sure they've been portrayed properly," said Graham Hooper, senior vice president and general manager of Buena Vista Games. "But a lot of the ideas come from Tetsuya Nomura."

Unfortunately, Nomura and members of the *Kingdom Hearts II* development team were tight-lipped about any additional details, but they did indicate the game will be ready for a 2004 release.

## PLAYONLINE OR ELSE!

With the relative success of *Final Fantasy XI*, Square Enix has started to make a huge push for its PlayOnline service and online games in general. In fact, two new online games were announced at the show—*Front Mission Online* and *Ambrosia Odyssey*. *Front Mission Online* is a massively multiplayer mech simulation based on the universe of the same name. *Ambrosia Odyssey* is an entirely new property that looks to have a somewhat medieval-style setting. It has been designed to be user-friendly, and it will also have a single-player mode for people who don't particularly care to play the game online. Finally, Square Enix revealed that several new features are going to be implemented into *Final Fantasy XI*, including PVP (player versus player), which was previously excluded because of design decisions. The new feature will help emphasize the conflicts between the different factions in the game.

## DATA STREAM

### About Time

Square Enix will be holding an official unveiling of *Final Fantasy XII* on Nov. 19. New characters and locations from the latest *Final Fantasy* are expected to be shown. Check www.1Up.com for the latest.

### Say What?

Sega of America has wisely decided to rethink the name for its *Shinobi* sequel. Instead of being called *Kunoichi*, the ninja action extravaganza will be known as *Nightshade* in North America.

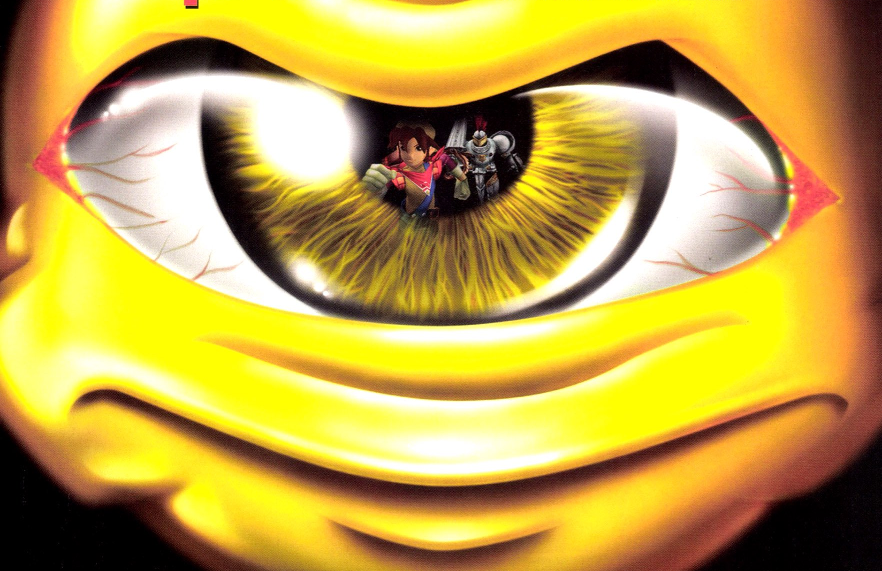
### Eye Got Rhythm

A European Eye Toy game called *Groove* will be the first title released for the peripheral to include licensed music from artists such as Madonna and Elvis.

### Silent Film

Konami has signed away the film rights for its *Silent Hill* survival-horror series. The movies will be produced by the same man responsible for the *Resident Evil* film and its upcoming sequel. Look for a radical reinvention of modern cinema sometime soon.

# Adventure is in the Eye of the Beholder.



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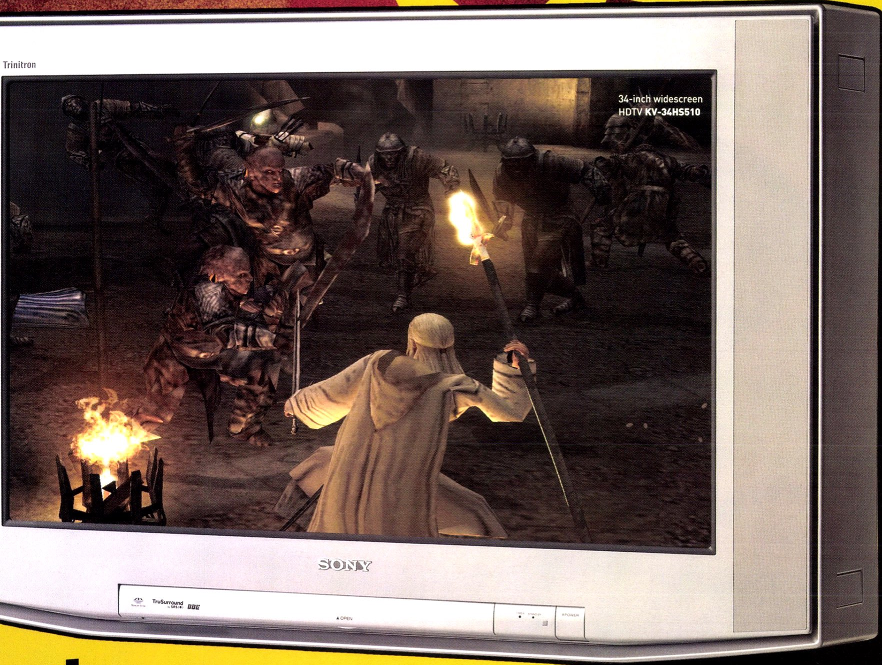


34-inch widescreen HDTV **KV-34HS510**

# the game pad

by Darren Gladstone

## Get the picture?

**Widescreen this, 480p that...man, the rocket scientists making television sets these days sure love throwing out terms and numbers that confuse the hell out of you. Walking into the electronics store, you know what you want: the biggest, dopest monster of a television you can squeeze into your tiny apartment to make your PS2 games look brilliant. Truth is, you need to consider many factors when buying a set, and there's no way to sum it up in two pages. So, we're going to break this up into digestible chunks. This month, we're answering the basic questions, so you know where to start looking in the electronics store this holiday season (hint: it's the area where they stash all those big boxes that glow and show moving pictures). In the next few months, we'll give you specific tips about different types of televisions and what you need to build your own killer game pad.**

**$500** The price of a 12-inch black-and-white Philco TV back in 1950...which would be, like, a billion dollars today!

## SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS!

E-mail our resident expert at darren_gladstone@ziffdavis.com, and we'll answer all the reader questions in an upcoming issue.

## IS DIGITAL TV REALLY THAT GOOD?

The short answer is "yes." All you need to know for now is that it makes the picture look damn pretty. But here's the obvious problem: HDTVs are expensive—and they're going to remain expensive for the immediate future. Another problem most people don't consider: A good HD set will shine a too-bright spotlight on a crappy picture. Without a component AV cable for your PS2, it'll look like you're watching your games through a cheese grater. Analog TV? Forget about it. Without an HD-signal decoder (usually sold separately) and a pure source like digital cable, your eyes will start bleeding from all the onscreen imperfections.

## HOW BIG IS BIG?

That's a very good question—for those with lots of money to burn. The short answer: Don't be tempted by that gorgeous 65-inch plasma set at the store. You need to consider not only the size of your room, but also how close you're sitting to the set.

## OK, SO HOW MUCH IS THIS GONNA COST?

It always comes down to the dollars. You've got a budget, and you want to get the best you can for the money. So, in order to keep you from openly weeping at the store, check out our handy breakdown of how much you can expect to spend on different sets. (Of course, prices change—just consider this an approximate range.) Don't say we didn't warn you....

## ACT LIKE YA KNOW...

While we're not dipping into DLP projectors—that's a whole other issue—let's check out what lurks behind the boob tube on some different sets:

- **Curved tubes (up to 40 inches):** Employed in the cheaper stuff, so don't expect HD here. These holdover CRT (cathode ray tube) sets will eventually be phased out.

- **Flat tube (up to 36 inches):** The current vogue in most televisions. They reduce glare and have much better viewing angles (more people can squeeze around the set to watch). While there are normal flat-tubed sets, you'll also find many HD sets with flat tubes.

- **Rear-projection (40 inches and up):** Big and impressive, these guys deliver an awesome picture. Just beware of burn-in on CRT-based rear-projection televisions. Imagine dropping upwards of two grand only to have a marathon session of *Soul Calibur II* kill the thing.

- **LCD (10 inches and up):** These are employed in those sexy flat-panel displays. Some are tiny displays perfect for popping into the car, while others are massive enough for your living room. Prices are coming down, but you're still going to see 30-inch sets in the $4,000 range.

- **Plasma (about 42 inches and up):** Buy a plasma television or a used car—your call. Sleek as all hell, these ultrathin sets have fine pictures but get damn pricey damn quick. One warning: We doubt you'll be playing one game non-stop for a couple days, but you could run the risk of burn in.

## Up to $500

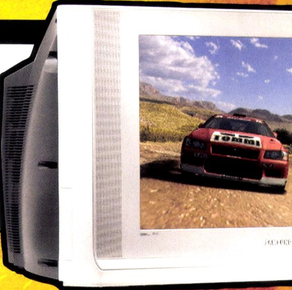
- Curved tubes: Up to 32 inches
- Flat tubes: Up to 24, plus some 27-inch sets

This is your entry point. HDTVs aren't this cheap yet, so know what you're getting into. HD will become the standard within a few years. If you're ready to accept that, check out Sony's **KV-27FS100**, which we've seen selling for about $450. It may be an analog set, but with picture quality this tight, you won't mind missing out on HD.

## $500 TO $1,000

- Curved tubes: Up to 36 inches
- Flat tubes: Up to 36 inches
- HDTV: Up to 32 inches, plus a few 36-inch sets
- HDTV Rear Projection: 40 (and a few 52) inches
- LCD: Up to 15 inches

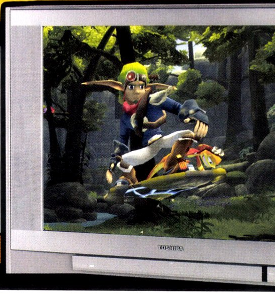
This is when you start getting a taste of the better things in life: larger tubes, HDTV, and maybe a modest LCD panel. You may be tempted to go for the gusto and get a 36-inch set, but pause for a moment. If you want a sharp picture coming from a television you won't have to chuck in a couple of years, consider a 30-inch HDTV. Prices are coming down, and you can get a decent HD set like **Samsung's TXN3071WHF** for just under a grand.



## $1,000 TO $1,600

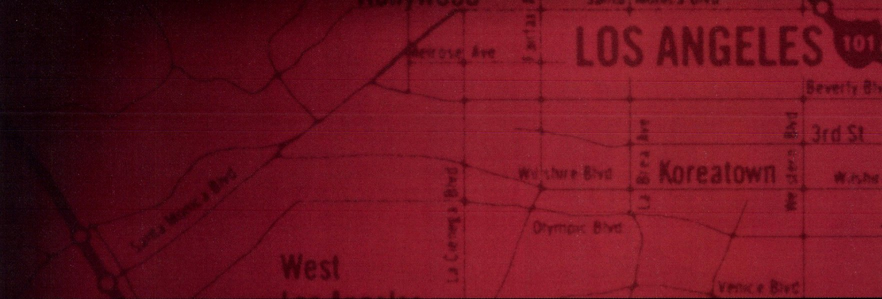
- Curved tubes: Up to 36 inches
- Flat tubes: Up to 32 inches
- HDTV: 27 inches, plus some 30-inch sets
- LCD: Up to 15 inches

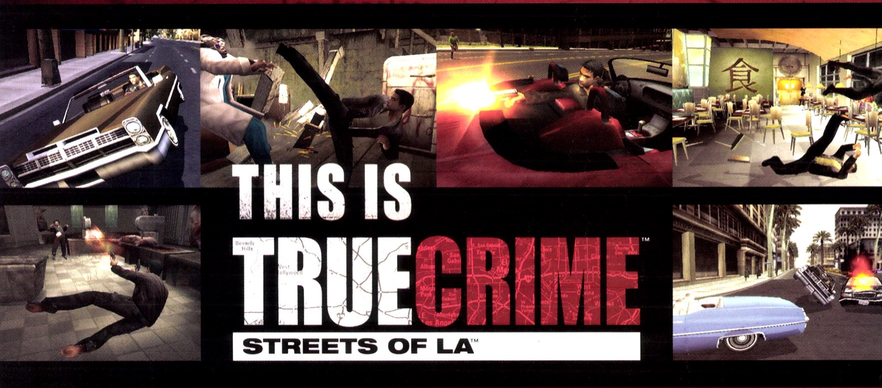
Now we're talkin'! If you can live without a widescreen set (really, they're best for DVD junkies), go for a good 32-inch HDTV. Or, if you're feeling dangerous, get a rear-projection set—just beware the chance of burn-in (look to the left for more on that). Our choice here just tops the $1,500 price point, but **Toshiba's 32HFX73** is definitely worth it. Over the years, Toshiba's produced some consistently awesome sets. Their strong point: true black color signals, so dark scenes don't get washed out. Perfect for all those dank, dark PS2 titles.



## OVER $1,600

If you're planning to spend that kind of scrill on a television, stop reading this magazine for home-theater tips and go someplace like www.hometheatermag.com. Seriously, we don't have the room to go into the detail these awesome televisions deserve. Plasma sets of all shapes and sizes, handsome-looking HDTVs, widescreen LCDs you can hang on the wall...you're not going to get any of these without dropping a couple thousand ducats. A reasonable set we currently dig is (again!) from Sony. The 34-inch widescreen HDTV **KV-34HS510** (left) is not only easy on the eyes, but it also delivers a good picture and has plenty of inputs on the back for everything in your home theater. And considering the performance, the $2,000 asking price ain't all that bad.





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Mature Sexual Themes
Strong Language
Violence

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*Nintendo GameCube game contains fewer songs.

Downtown
Venice Blvd
Crenshaw Blvd
BURGER
SOUNDTRACK ON
VYBE SQUAD/KOCH RECORDS
VybeSquad

**More FFX-2**
Japan's getting a new version of *FFX-2*, called *Final Fantasy X-2 International + Last Mission*. It has two new costumes (one is called the Psychicer) and a new quest. It probably isn't coming out in North America. No fair!

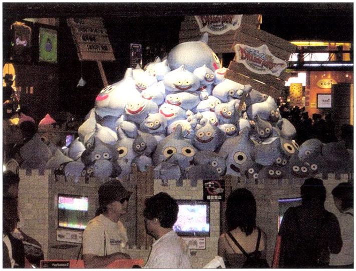
## ONLY IN JAPAN

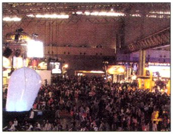
### GEGEGE NO KITARO
### KONAMI

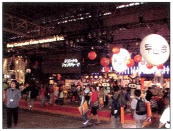
"I see dead people," the famous line goes. Kitaro, star of Konami's new simulation RPG *Gegege no Kitaro*, has the same problem—he sees ghosts all the time. That might seem natural when you consider that he's a monster himself, but it gets a bit odder when you factor in the fact that his father is a disembodied eyeball who lives in Kitaro's left eye socket. All this wackiness is based on one of Japan's best-known horror animes (think ghost stories), penned by the truly insane Shigeru Mizuki. The anime—tapping into a strong Japanese cultural belief in *yokai* (spirits)—hit it really big in the 1980s, with predictable NES and Super NES games released to capitalize on the popularity. Now that the anime is enjoying a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*–esque revival, it's not surprising to see that a PS2 game will hit Japanese stores in December. The art of the series has been faithfully reproduced—check out those awesome hand-drawn characters in the screenshots—but the game has been given a modern makeover. On his quest to hunt down and defeat evil spirits, Kitaro has two new companions: a mobile phone and a laptop. They're a far cry from the unlicensed nuclear accelerators of *Ghostbusters*, but they're apparently effective nonetheless, equipped to sniff out ghosts in their hiding spots. Despite being equipped with these mechanical companions, Kitaro can't surf the Web or chat for hours with his girlfriend. But he can morph into various "jobs" to perform attacks—jobs like a juggler (surely not the most intimidating). You could liken it to *FFX-2*'s dress-up system, but without the bevy of hotties changing into different outfits. Details remain sketchy on where the "simulation" aspect comes into play (is it possible for a ghost-hunting game featuring a monster hero with a dad in his eye to be a simulation at all?), but the kooky humor, art, and generally spooky vibe of this RPG look good to us. Pity that look is all we can do: Konami hasn't announced this for the United States, and it probably won't.

### I WAS BORN A SPIRIT

Kitaro's creator, Shigeru Mizuki, doesn't just write about spirits—he actively believes in ghostly happenings. At the height of the series' popularity, he claimed that spirits were overrunning his own body. With the rebirth of Kitaro, Mizuki is enjoying another spell in the spotlight. He recently spoke at the International Spirits Convention and also released his autobiography, aptly entitled *I Was Born a Spirit*. Incidentally, Mizuki also reckons that cities are "scabs on the earth," draining away the planet's lifeforce. *FFVII*, anyone?







# SENSORY OVERLOAD

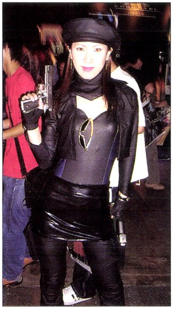
Didn't go to the Tokyo Game Show? We've compiled 10 of the coolest moments from Japan's biggest gaming event

### THE CROWD

The first day of the show is reserved for members of the press, but on days two and three, the floodgates are opened, letting in literally thousands of overexcited children, cosplayers, and all sorts of gamers. It's amazing to see so many people, but they make it really difficult to actually *play* any of the games.

### HIDEO KOJIMA

As you'd expect, the creator of *Metal Gear Solid* is quite a popular man. Just before the show started, he was spotted standing next to Dennis Dyack in front of the *Snake Eater* trailer wall. He also took some time to do a stage interview, drawing dozens of fans to look at his face on an enormous screen.



### VIDEOGAME CHARACTERS

There's something incredibly scary about seeing giant videogame characters walk around the show floor. Even more frightening: There's someone actually inside those freaky costumes. But, hey, everyone loves monkeys, especially monkeys wearing shorts!

### METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Konami showed two *MGS3* trailers at the Tokyo Game Show. One was the same trailer from ECTS, while the other was a slightly edited version of the E3 trailer with scenes showing Snake's proficiency with a knife. You'd think it would have the biggest crowd until you ventured over to....

### MACROSS

Bandai's booth was fairly busy throughout most of the show, but it got horribly packed during the trailer presentation for its *Macross* (*Robotech* for North Americans) game, which is in development at Sega-AM2. The trailer showed some of the in-game action, as well as cut-scenes that follow the events from the series, to the tee. Judging from the throng of eager visitors, *Macross* still holds a significant place in the minds of the Japanese gaming public.

### SLIMES...LOTS OF THEM

Even though *Dragon Quest VIII* was a no-show, the blind stare of the blue slimes had some sort of hypnotic power over those who would dare venture by the mountain of plush creatures. There were even slimes stuffed into the booth scaffolding, as well as slime seat cushions for showgoers who needed to rest their weary behinds.

### MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

Um, what is this doing here? Needless to say, the *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* booth was quite a surreal sight, as booth workers marched around in uniforms in an attempt to coax people to play a level set in the Japanese jungle. Uh yeah...hey, look! Cosplayers!

### JAMES BOND

EA definitely gets extra points for having one of the coolest booth setups at TGS. The *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing* area was basically a bar where people could play the game while sitting next to ladies in fancy dresses. Seeing young children at this booth proved quite amusing.

### NAMCO

Similar to Bandai and Konami, Namco's most popular section was the video wall. Here, attendees got a chance to take a look at the recently announced action game featuring *Tekken*'s Nina. The CG cut-scenes were pretty cool looking, but the gameplay seems a little rough at the moment.

### BOOTH BABES

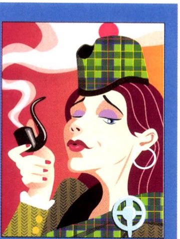
Yeah. Yeah. We ogled all the gorgeous women representing various companies on the show floor. After all, it wouldn't be a truly worthwhile TGS experience if we didn't.

**100x** The number of times faster the rumored PS3 processor is, compared with the latest Pentium.

### Clish MacLaver's

# GOSSIP GOSSIP

## All the muck that's fit to rake



As all the big games for the holidays start to turn up in stores, we get ready for the onslaught in 2004 and beyond. As always, chatter on the next-generation PlayStation is still very much on the agenda.

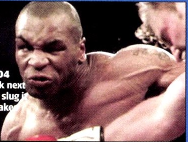
### THE PS3 NEWS CONTINUES

Last month, I explored much of what's happening with regard to PS3, and this month, there are a few extra tidbits. While the machine's PS2 and PS1 compatibility has been very publicly revealed, I've heard rumblings that it will also run PSP code. It's unlikely that the system will ship with the ability to run UMD discs. But, if Sony continues to explore the possibilities of downloadable content that is then transferred to UMD (imagine PSP games distributed much like digital music), it's entirely possible that you'll be able to use PS3 to download the game code and store it on the hard drive. And if you can store it, why not play it, too? Considering PS3 is significantly more powerful than PSP, it isn't too much of a stretch imagining its ability to emulate its baby brother. As usual, Sony is tight-lipped about the more radical ideas floating around, since they may not all make it into the final box, but the frequency with which we're hearing about new concepts indicates Sony is hinting at some kind of announcement. As I've said before, I'd be extremely surprised if in 2004, there isn't some kind of early "official" PS3 announcement declaring the system's specs along with some appropriately unrealistic tech demonstrations.

### WHAT IS PS2.5?

If you read some of this magazine's competition, you're probably getting used to constant references to something they're calling PlayStation 2.5. What on earth are they talking about? Nothing, that's what. There is no PS2.5. There is no jazzed-up version of the existing machine, one that's capable of fancier graphics or any other such nonsense. We'll see PSX in late 2004 (which is a PS2 in the same box as a gigantic hard drive boasting TiVo-like abilities, along with all kinds of media-server goodies) and then the full-on PS3 in 2005 or 2006. Don't pay attention to people who don't know what they're talking about.

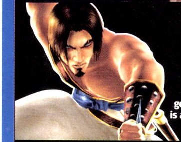
## POW



**MULTIPLE BOXING SIMS IN '04**

Expect boxing to make a comeback next year as the kings of sports games slug it out with each other to see who makes the best punching simulator.

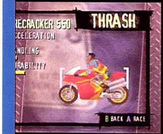
## STAB



**RETURNING TO PERSIA**

With *Prince of Persia* proving to be so good, it's hardly surprising that a sequel is already under way. Expect to see it out in time for the holidays next year.

## RASH



**BIKING AND FIGHTING**

My contacts at EA plead ignorance when it comes to word on a new *Road Rash*, but I've heard it is going to happen and will be rolled out at E3 in May. Expect a *Need For Speed*–like transformation.

## JAK III

**THE INEVITABLE THIRD ONE**

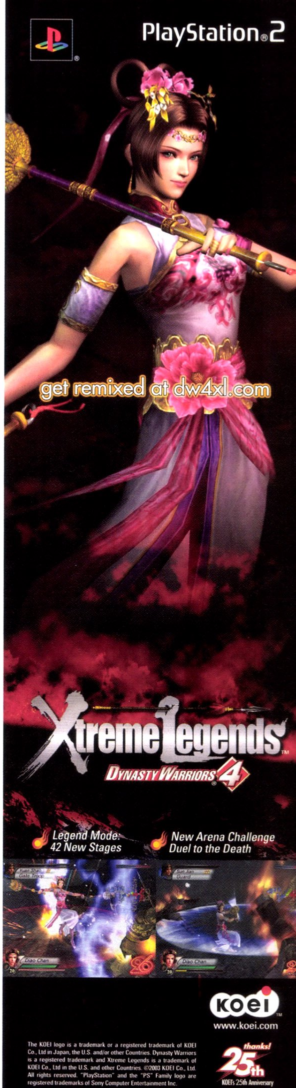
Don't be surprised if we hear news of a third *Jak* game in the next few months, as well as a possible *Jak* spin-off, most likely a vehicle-based game.

## E-MAIL ME!

Got some good gaming gossip? If you hear anything juicy or get your hands on some cool screens or pictures, send me an e-mail at the following address:

clish_maclaver@ziffdavis.com

Illustration by Greg White



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**HUMBLE BEGINNINGS**
Before he starred in *X-Men*, Hugh Jackman played the role of Curly in an *Oklahoma!* TV production.

# DVD REVIEWS

By John Scalzi

## X2: X-MEN UNITED

(Patrick Stewart, Hugh Jackman)

The *X-Men* movies are fairly dour as far as superhero films go, and you have director Bryan Singer to thank for that. Sure, the *X-Men* comics have always been about alienation and division, but at least they had bright primary inks and such. Singer, on the other hand, clads his heroes in moody blacks and blues and gives them sets to match. It works—the *X-Men* films come across as more weighty than they actually are—but when you get right down to it, after all the explosions, special effects, and cool mutant abilities, neither *X-Men* film is what you would call fun.

*X2*, for example, features not one but two attempted genocides, which is probably two more attempted genocides than most films (especially ones based on comic books) really need. Through it, Professor Xaviér (Stewart) and his band of mutants save the world for the normal people more out of a sense of duty than any real enthusiasm. Despite the action scenes and noble sacrifices from the "good" mutants, I eventually came away with the feeling that, ultimately, Magneto is right: The regular humans will never warm to the mutants, and frankly, the mutants ought to corral the lot of them into, oh, I don't know, Iowa, and use the rest of the country as a mutant playground. I'm reasonably certain that's not what Singer is intending his films to convey, but that's what I'm getting out of them. *X2* is reasonably entertaining; I just wonder where the series is going to end up.

X2
X-MEN UNITED

The DVD includes two sets of commentaries, 11 making-of featurettes (including several on Nightcrawler, the newest X-Man), deleted scenes, and still libraries.

**Movie Score:** ★★★½
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★★½

## UPCOMING DVD RELEASES

**November 4, 2003**
Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights
The Anna Nicole Show: Season 1
Finding Nemo
Legally Blonde 2
Star Trek DS9: Season 6
X-Files: Season 8

**November 11, 2003**
Dumb and Dumberer
Friday Night
King of the Hill: Season 2
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines
Three's Company: Season 1

**November 18, 2003**
Lara Croft: Tomb Raider–The Cradle of Life
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers–Extended
Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas
Space Ghost Coast to Coast 1
The West Wing: Season 1

**November 25, 2003**
Bruce Almighty
Dark Crystal
X2: X-Men United

## BRUCE ALMIGHTY

(Jim Carrey, Morgan Freeman)

Would you trust Jim Carrey with the keys to the universe? The answer, from *Bruce Almighty*: Sure, if you want a world where dogs pee standing up. And who doesn't? Carrey is in *Liar, Liar* mode (not surprising, since this film has the same director and co-writer), acting wacky and zany but pulling it together just in time for the heartwarming life lesson. Just like an episode of *ALF*! OK, that was a cheap shot. Anyway, this film is good, clean fun, if somewhat theologically suspect. Extras include outtakes, deleted scenes, director commentary, and "The Process of Jim." Guess what that's about.

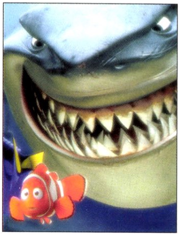
**Movie Score:** ★★★½
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★★

## FINDING NEMO

(Albert Brooks, Ellen DeGeneres)

*Finding Nemo* is widely hailed as Pixar's masterpiece, which is high praise considering the *Toy Story* films and *Monsters, Inc.* Visually, I find no argument with this assessment. This is, simply, one of the

**DID YOU KNOW?**
The "flying" scene in *The Cradle of Life* was real. The people you see flying are the two men who invented the parachute suits.



most beautifully animated films ever made, and like everyone, I want to live in that coral reef with all the pretty fishes. Storywise, however, it's not as strong as people let on. I don't know if anyone else has noticed, but Pixar's movies tend to be about someone trying to get home, and after four out of five films with the same theme, you look for a change. But, *Finding Nemo* is still very good, of course. If there's a kid in your living quarters, you'll be getting this. Resistance is futile. There are lots of family-friendly extras, including games, encyclopedia information about fish, a short film featuring Jean-Michael Cousteau, the animated short *Knick Knack*, plus a commentary, making-of and art documentaries, and—love it!—virtual aquariums.
**Movie Score:** ★★★★
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★★★

## LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER–THE CRADLE OF LIFE

(Angelina Jolie, Gerard Butler)

This sequel is somewhat better than the original film, but considering what an incoherent mess that was, how could it not be? *Cradle of Life* has a director who actually knows something about action (*Speed* director Jan de Bont), and it has something akin to a plot (keeping the bad guys from opening the Ark of the Covenant—oh, wait, I mean Pandora's box), but at the end of the day, it's still about pouring the delicious Angelina Jolie into something formfitting, having her toss off a line in that sultry fake accent, and then letting her save the world through calisthenics. I know, I know: Why am I complaining? Yet I am. This one was a flop, so that's the end of this series. Let's hope Jolie gets something action oriented, something not so aggressively blah. No extras were announced at press time.
**Movie Score:** ★★½
**DVD Extras Score:** N/A

## LEGALLY BLONDE 2: RED, WHITE & BLONDE

(Reese Witherspoon, Luke Wilson)

The *Legally Blonde* movies work only if you cut them a whole bunch of intellectual slack. Suspension of disbelief is particularly important in this sequel, since the Washington, D.C., of this film is composed mainly of idiots and straw men specially designed for Reese's character (campaigning for animal rights) to blow past in a haze of pink. But Reese is cute and the film is fun, so most are willing to put up with a certain amount of thickheadedness in order to spend time in its company. Extras include a cast commentary, a LeAnn Rimes video, deleted scenes, a gag reel, and a Delta Nu quiz.
**Movie Score:** ★★★
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★★

## SINBAD: LEGEND OF THE SEVEN SEAS

(Brad Pitt, Catherine Zeta-Jones)

DreamWorks is still scratching its collective head as to why *Sinbad* flopped so horribly in the theaters. Well, guys, I'll tell you why—your animation style is all fussy. Seriously. All your "traditional" animation looks earnest and stiff, and it turns off the kids (lucky for you, Disney has the same problem at the moment). *Sinbad* has a cool story, fun voices (Pitt and Zeta-Jones), and some great set pieces, and if you had drawn it like *Aladdin*, you'd be rolling in the dough. But you didn't, and look what it got you. Yes, I could be wrong. However, you were wrong, too, and it cost you more than my being wrong cost me. The DVD comes with commentaries, DVD-ROM games (including a PC-game demo level), making-of bits, and Easter eggs.
**Movie Score:** ★★★½
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★★½

## TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

(Arnold Schwarzenegger, Claire Danes)

This *Terminator* installment feels surprisingly small and intimate, and I'll be the first to note that when one spends $175 million on a film, "small and intimate" probably aren't the adjectives the filmmakers are aiming for. But what can you do? Even the biggest action scene in the film (involving a crane and several miles of breakable objects) seems contrarily like a miniature. Oddly, it suits the action and the characters well, especially considering what happens to John Connor (Nick Stahl) and his friend Kate (Danes) at the end. And it's a good send-off for Ah-nold's relationship with the Terminator character. Also, the new Terminatrix: mega-hot. The DVD includes cast and director commentary, special-effects features, bloopers and outtakes, and a special intro by Schwarzenegger.
**Movie Score:** ★★★½
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★★

## SPACE GHOST COAST TO COAST: VOLUME ONE

(Space Ghost, Zorak)

Oh, God. Words cannot describe how much I love *Space Ghost Coast to Coast*, and not just because of the goofy real-life celebrity interviews, which are, truth be told, the absolute least interesting thing about the show. No, I love it because it provides proof for the old Hanna-Barbera dictum (promulgated in the dark ages of the '60s and '70s) that states if the writing is good enough, no one will notice the crappy animation. And it's true! Space Ghost, Zorak, and Moltar have 10 moves (at most) between them, and yet this show is one of the best animated TV series ever. The writing is just that good. If you don't rush out to get this and subsequent *SGC2C* discs, you can't say you actually love animation. So there. The only extra is a commentary, but it's a pretty good one.
**Movie Score:** ★★★★
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★½

## THREE'S COMPANY: SEASON ONE

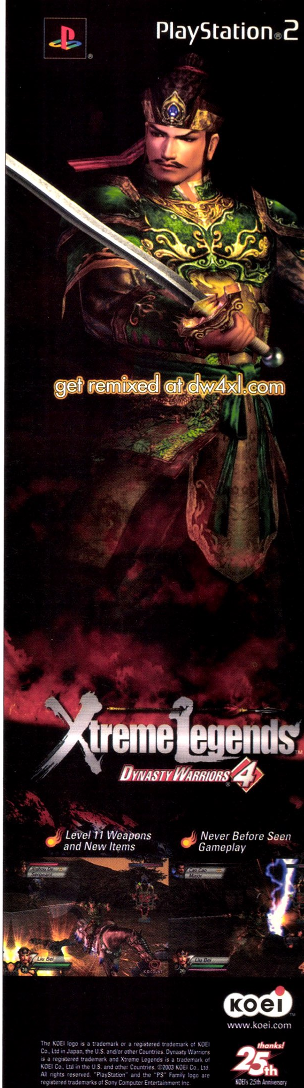
(John Ritter, Suzanne Somers)

Like the rest of America, I'm still mourning the death of John Ritter, and frankly, my wife has been yelling at me to get rid of the shrine in the closet. Fortunately, this makes an adequate replacement. The "first season" of the series, which was actually just a six-episode tryout, features Jack, Chrissy, and Janet (Joyce DeWitt) being all klutzy, airheaded, and sensible, respectively. Are they as good as you remember, presuming you remember that far back? Eh, it's very, *very* '70s, which is a blessing and a curse. But Ritter is very good at physical comedy, and that's something that lasts. There are no extras.
**Movie Score:** ★★★
**DVD Extras Score:** N/A

## THE WEST WING: COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

(Rob Lowe, Martin Sheen)

I'm of the opinion that showing *The West Wing* to liberals constitutes cruel and unusual punishment because they want a president like Josiah Bartlet (Martin Sheen) so damn much that while the show is on, they probably sneak up and lick the TV screen in desire. And man, that's just sad. The first season of *West Wing*, like first seasons of most shows, is still working out the kinks (one of the kinks worked out: Moira Kelly, who was booted at the end of the season), but the show also has most of the elements in place, including creator Aaron Sorkin's patented lightning-fast dialogue, the excellent interplay between the cast, and, of course, the fantasy figure of Bartlet. Remember to Windex the television after watching. The DVD set features commentary on selected episodes, a few bloopers and outtakes, some making-of and behind-the-scenes stuff, and deleted scenes.
**Movie Score:** ★★★★
**DVD Extras Score:** ★★★



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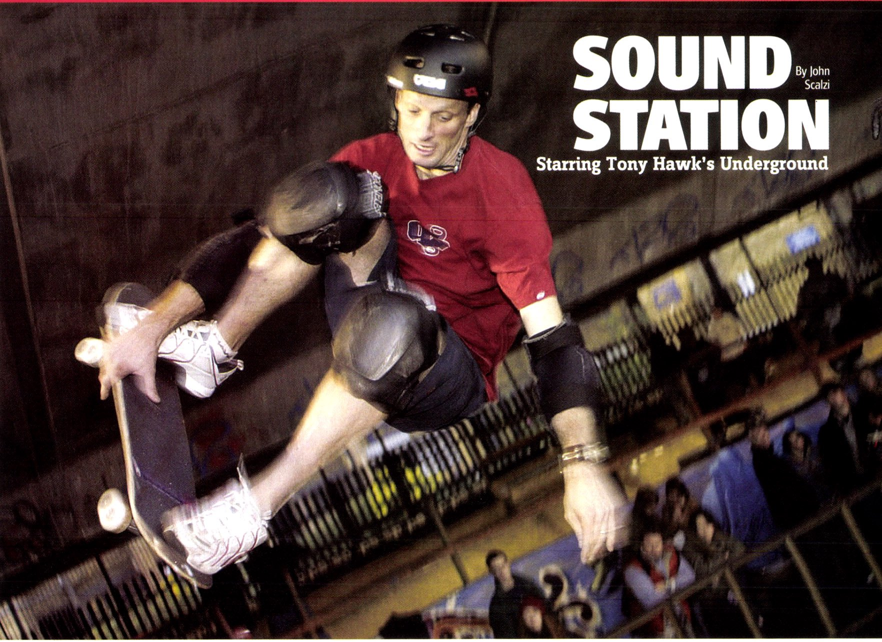
**PUNK ROCK EDUCATION**
Greg Graffin, lead singer for Bad Religion, has a Master's Degree in Geology and a Ph.D. in Evolutionary Biology-Paleontology.



# SOUND STATION

By John Scalzi

## Starring Tony Hawk's Underground

### Bad Religion: *No Control*

BAD
RELIGION
NO
CONTROL

This album boasts 15 tracks in 26 minutes and 30 seconds. Clearly, someone doesn't believe in the power ballad. And yet, in the span of a SpongeBob show, you get a nice, fast slug of unadulterated California punk stampeding by you, with lyrics about relationships and power and hypocrisy, which would qualify as introspective if they were sung just a tiny bit slower (but, then, that's what lyric sheets are for). Bad Religion's been around in one form or another for two decades now, and *No Control* is a prime reason why. It's the punk, the whole punk, and nothing but the punk.

**Final Score** ★★★★

### Jane's Addiction: *Strays*

Jane's Addiction's sellout album, in that it plays as a smoother, packaged parody of the earlier, freakier incarnation of the band (it was produced by Bob Ezrin, for God's sake, who fairly defines the phrase "Rock Dinosaur"). And you know what? It's still pretty damn good, because even tamed, the combination of Perry Farrell's adenoidal shriek, Dave Navarro's Wall of God guitars, and Stephen's Percy's tub-thumbing skin work just flies right out of your speaker and shakes the back wall. And anyway, if anyone's going to rip off the band that made *Nothing's Shocking*, it might as well be Jane's Addiction.

**Final Score** ★★★½

### Queens of the Stone Age: *Songs for the Deaf*

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE
SONGS FOR THE DEAF
PARENTAL ADVISORY

If Queens of the Stone Age accomplishes nothing else, it deserves the thanks of a grateful nation for getting Dave Grohl back on the drum throne on *Deaf*. His drum work is unmistakable and a pleasure to hear, and it ups the level of an already fine Queens album to (excuse the pun) hard-rock nirvana. Ironically, however, I think the best (or at least most idiosyncratic) track is the "hidden" "Mosquito Song," which has hardly any Grohl goodness at all. That's a good thing, incidentally, since it shows that *Deaf* is more than the sum of its stunt casting.

**Final Score** ★★★★

### Stiff Little Fingers: *Inflammable Material*

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS
INFLAMMABLE MATERIAL

Mmmmm. Now here's a slice of punk history for you. SLF is a '70s punk band from Northern Ireland, and *Inflammable* is saturated with a sense of the place and the era (which, in case you're ignit, was a firebox of Catholic versus Protestant fighting). So the songs are actually *about* something, instead of the usual punk lashing-out. Listen to "Suspect Device" and "Alternative Ulster" and you'll hear a band daring its listeners to be something more than reflexively hateful. And there's good music in the bargain. Come for the punk, stay for the message.

**Final Score** ★★★½

### Supernatural: *The Lost Freestyle Files*

SUPERNATURAL

*The Lost Freestyle Files* is a collection of really crappy sound recordings of Supernatural dogging other rappers during freestyle battles, interspersed with somewhat less crappy-sounding studio tracks in which Supernatural brags about how cool he is. Inasmuch as I consider freestyle rapping to be the audio equivalent of pro wrestling (i.e., it's supposed to be "live," but you can't help but wonder how much is scripted in advance, and it plays to the lowest common denominator in any event), you can imagine what I think of this.

**Final Score** ★★

Photo by Getty Images

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Giancarlo is a ninja.

**ANIME 101: DUB VS. SUB**
Many hardcore anime fans prefer to watch subtitled DVDs with the original Japanese voice-acting, instead of the clunky versions dubbed by U.S. actors.

# ANIMANIA!

By Dave Smith

## Satoshi Kon's classic comes home

### Millennial Fair

If you missed the theatrical release of Satoshi Kon's *Millennium Actress* (below), which would be relatively easy to do outside major urban markets, Dreamworks has your back with the new DVD release that's going on sale as you read this. The home-video version of the beautiful time-tripping love story is a little light on the extra features—there's no English voice track for the dub-preferring set—but that shouldn't stop anyone from checking out a superior film.

### Space, O Frozen Sea of Stars

If you buy anything in November (since you should have bought *Millennium Actress* in October), make it *Arcadia of My Youth*, AnimEigo's DVD rerelease of the legendary Leiji Matsumoto epic. Two-and-a-half hours of classic space opera chronicle the origin of space pirate and ultimate human Captain Harlock, with more brilliant moments than we have space to mention here.

### Now Boarding Flight 005

A generation raised on the iniquitous *Dirty Pair Flash* should seek appropriate re-education from ADV's new DVD release of the classic *DP* OVAs and movies. The latest addition to the stack is *Flight 005 Conspiracy*, the darkest and most depressing action-mystery to ever star two bouncy secret agents in hot pants, and it'll be followed in about a month by the also excellent (and ever-so-slightly more upbeat) *Affair on Nolandia*.

### Darkness Comes to Light

It's been a little while since it came and went in Japan, but *Martian Successor Nadesico: The Prince of Darkness* is finally coming out on DVD, thanks to ADV. The movie sequel takes place four years after the end of the mecha-comedy TV series, and it combines a little dead-serious drama with a lot of bizarre sociological humor surrounding shoujo-versus-shounen conflicts on the planet of the Gekigangeroids. Mix that with a lovely redesign of the 16-year-old Captain Hoshino Ruri and you have a fine follow-up for fans of the TV show.

### What's a "Geneon," Anyway?

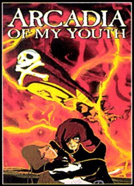
If you see "Geneon Entertainment" on some of your favorite upcoming shows—*Last Exile*, for instance—don't be confused. That's the new name for Pioneer's media publishing label, reflecting the acquisition of Pioneer LDC and Pioneer Entertainment by Japanese corporation Dentsu. You can still find its anime and soundtrack titles on the Web at geneonanimation.com and geneonmusic.com, and Geneon's U.S. division plans to continue expanding its releases here.

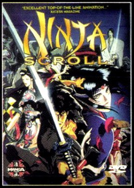
### Hmm! Ninjas!

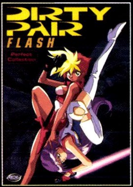
The movie that introduced many fans to Japanese animation in the '90s, Yoshiaki Kawajiri's *Ninja Scroll* has been the recipient of a fine rerelease by Manga Video. The 10th-anniversary special-edition disc features a remastered widescreen cut of the film with Dolby Digital EX (5.1-channel) and DTS-ES (6.1-channel) soundtracks in both English and Japanese. It's safe to say this movie has never looked or sounded better.

### Ye Not the Guilty, Whoever That Is

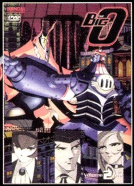
Followers of the series' Cartoon Network run need no encouragement, but just about anyone else should seek out the first disc of *Big O Season II* on Dec. 2. Roger the Negotiator and his art-deco Megadeus are wrecking Paradigm City for another 13 episodes on four discs. Fans of modern mecha action shouldn't miss the show.

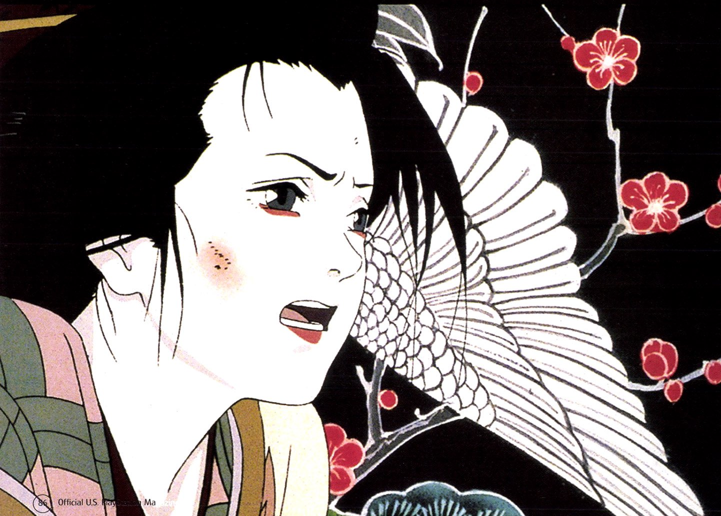






COMING SOON!!
NADESICO the movie
The prince of darkness





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# BLOOD,
# A FAMILY'S
# TRAGIC
# DESTINY
# IS BORN.

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"Konami's classic adventure series looks drop dead gorgeous in 3D and plays brilliantly." - *PSM*

"The visuals at work here are simply magical." - *PLAY*

"What does it actually feel like to play? Damned fun." - *EGM*

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PlayStation®2

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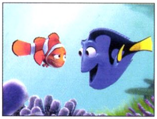
# THE LIST

## The 9 coolest things we could find this month

**HOT DVD**
### FINDING NEMO



It was one of the best movies of the year, and it promises to be an even better DVD. This two-disc set includes a peek at the new Pixar film *The Incredibles*, virtual aquariums, making-of shorts, and the Pixar short "Knick Knack."

**OVERLOOKED GAME**
### GLADIUS

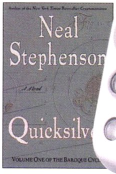
LucasArts stops making *Star Wars* games and proves that it knows what it's doing with turn-based tactical role-playing games. *Gladius* is like *Final Fantasy Tactics* in Roman times and features a huge host of creatures, including our favorites, the Mongrel Men. Check it out—you won't be disappointed.

**DRINKING FROM THE ROCK GOBLET**
### PINK: TRY THIS CD

PINK
TRY THIS

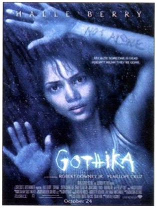
After dabbling with some rock stylings on her second disc, Pink, like many of her female peers, is now a full-on rock chick. What was left of the saccharine, over-produced nonsense is now gone. She's not really punk, but she's no pop princess, either.

**AWESOME READ**
### QUICKSILVER (THE BAROQUE CYCLE VOL. 1)

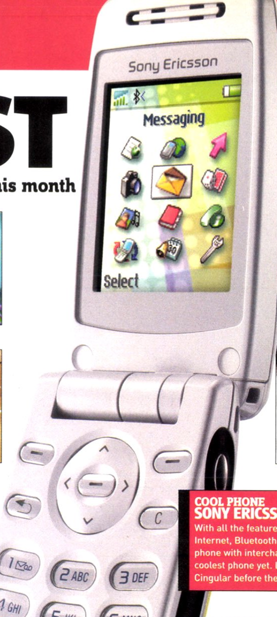


We love Neal Stephenson, and if you liked the complex structure and historical cleverness of *Cryptonomicon*, you'll love this enormous first chapter in his projected trilogy about Enoch Root, who appears in *Cryptonomicon*. It's set in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, but don't let that put you off.

**BEAUTIFUL HORROR**
### GOTHIKA

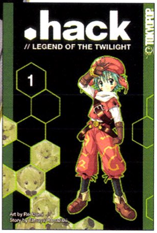


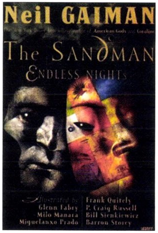
Starring two of the hottest women in the world (Halle Berry and Penelope Cruz), *Gothika* is destined for hugeness regardless of its quality when it hits theaters on November 21. Berry stars as a criminal psychologist who wakes up one day as a patient in the institution where she works (oh, the irony!), framed for a murder she has no memory of (oh, the horror!). Heard it before? Expect chills and thrills...and Robert Downey Jr.



**COOL PHONE**
### SONY ERICSSON Z600

With all the features of the cool T616 (color screen, camera, Internet, Bluetooth—all the goodies) in a handsome clamshell phone with interchangeable covers, the Z600 is Sony Ericsson's coolest phone yet. Look for it on AT&T Wireless, T-Mobile, and Cingular before the end of the year.





**GORGEOUS GADGETS**
### VIRGIN PULSE

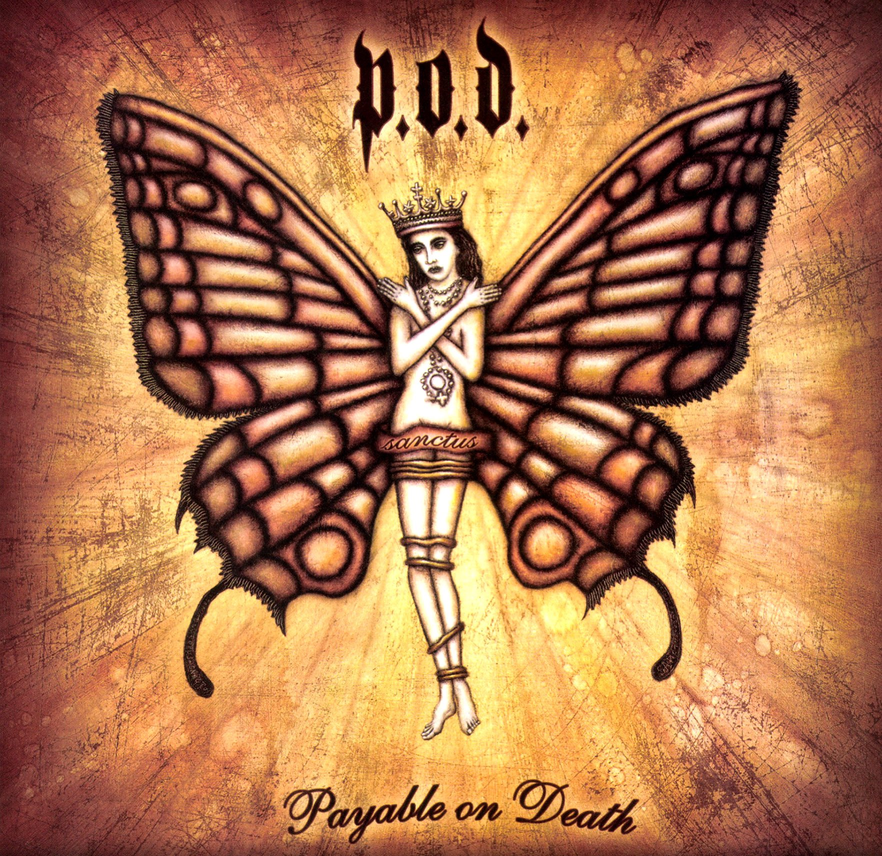
Available exclusively at Target, these gorgeous, sleek silver pieces of electronic goodness are extremely reasonably priced. Check out the combined 10.4-inch LCD TV and DVD player for $499, or the cool audio products, including clock radios, MP3 players, and personal radios. Time to start dropping hints for the holidays.

**MULTIMEDIA MANGA**
### .hack//LEGEND OF THE TWILIGHT

It's a series of four PS2 games, two different anime shows, and a manga series, and it's arguably one of the most ambitious multimedia projects ever made. Each piece helps tell the greater story of "The World" of *.hack*, and the manga, recently released by Tokyopop, is a vital part. Buy it now...it even reads backwards, just like the Japanese books. Plus, it's really darn funny, and it's got a great visual style.

**RETURN OF THE KING**
### SANDMAN: ENDLESS NIGHTS

After closing the door on the Sandman years ago, Neil Gaiman returns with seven new stories (one for each of the Endless: Death, Desire, Delirium, Dream, Despair, Destruction, and Destiny) illustrated by seven different artists, including Dave McKean (*Arkham Asylum*, *Mr. Punch*) and Glenn Fabry (*Slaine*, *Preacher*, *Hellblazer*). If you buy only one graphic novel this year, make it this one.



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PlayStation 2

Amplitude game and demo
rated T for Teen.

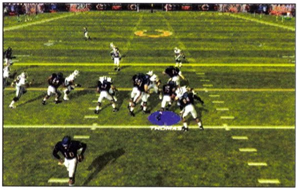
**www.realultimatepower.net** You love ninjas, we love ninjas, here's a place for some ninja goodness.

# BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EBGAMES electronics boutique

## PS2 Top 20 Sales

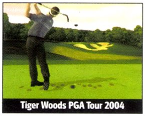
Ninjas get all the credit, but what about samurai?!? Sure, they don't wear those snazzy black pajamas, but they've got big armor and horses and other neat stuff. Let's give props to the samurai, 'kay?



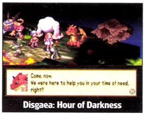
Scooter and Giancarlo both went to UC Berkeley, where the "NFL home team" is the Oakland Raiders. Scooter still roots for Oaktown, but Giancarlo's team of choice is now the Chicago Bears.

| | Title/Publisher | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Madden NFL 2004** (EA Sports) | ★★★★★ |
| 2 | **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004** (EA Sports) | ★★★★★ |
| 3 | **Soul Calibur II** (Namco) | ★★★★★ |
| 4 | **ESPN NFL Football** (Sega) | ★★★★½ |
| 5 | **NASCAR Thunder 2004** (EA Sports) | ★★★★★ |
| 6 | **Disgaea: Hour of Darkness** (Atlus) | ★★★★ |
| 7 | **NHL 2004** (EA Sports) | ★★★★ |
| 8 | **Simpsons Hit & Run** (Vivendi Universal) | ★★★★ |
| 9 | **SOCOM (game only)** (Sony CEA) | ★★★★★ |
| 10 | **ESPN NHL Hockey** (Square Enix U.S.A.) | ★★★★★ |
| 11 | **.hack//OUTBREAK** (Bandai) | ★★★★ |
| 12 | **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City** (Rockstar) | ★★★★★ |
| 13 | **NCAA Football 2004** (EA Sports) | ★★★★★ |
| 14 | **Final Fantasy X** (Square Enix U.S.A.) | ★★★★★ |
| 15 | **DDRMAX 2** (Konami) | ★★★★ |
| 16 | **Cabella's Deer Hunt 2004 Season** (Activision) | ★★★½ |
| 17 | **Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution** (Sega) | ★★★★★ |
| 18 | **Silent Hill 3** (Konami) | ★★★★½ |
| 19 | **Tekken 4** (Namco) | ★★★½ |
| 20 | **Hitman 2: Silent Assassin** (Eidos) | ★★★★½ |

Soul Calibur II

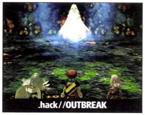


Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004



Come, now.
We were here to help you in your time of need, right?

Disgaea: Hour of Darkness



.hack//OUTBREAK

Source: EB Games, September 2003. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets, and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff.

## PS1 Top 10 Sales

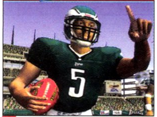
Move
Act
Wait
Status
Auto-battle
Squire

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **FF Tactics** | Square |
| 2 | **InuYasha** | Bandai |
| 3 | **Beyblade** | Crave |
| 4 | **Madden NFL 2004** | EA |
| 5 | **Final Fantasy Origins** | Square |
| 6 | **Namco Museum Vol. 3** | Namco |
| 7 | **DBZ: Ult. Battle 22** | Atari |
| 8 | **Shrek Treasure Hunt** | TDK |
| 9 | **DDR Konamix** | Konami |
| 10 | **Street Fighter Alpha 3** | Capcom |

## Japan's Top 10 PS2 Games

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Dynasty Warriors 4XL** | Koei |
| 2 | **Grand Theft Auto III** | Capcom |
| 3 | **Tennis no Ohji-Sama 2** | Konami |
| 4 | **Sunrise World War** | Bandai |
| 5 | **Gundam: Enc in Space** | Bandai |
| 6 | **Drakengard** | Square Enix |
| 7 | **Winning Eleven 7** | Konami |
| 8 | **Best Play Pro Baseball** | Enterbrain |
| 9 | **Gekito Pro Baseball** | Sega |
| 10 | **Dynasty Warriors 4 PP** | Koei |

## Top 10 BLOCKBUSTER Rentals



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Madden NFL 2004 (PS2)** | EA |
| 2 | **Simpsons Hit & Run (PS2)** | VUG |
| 3 | **Soul Calibur II (PS2)** | Namco |
| 4 | **Tiger Woods 2004 (PS2)** | EA |
| 5 | **Soul Calibur II (GC)** | Namco |
| 6 | **NCAA Football 2004 (PS2)** | EA |
| 7 | **Soul Calibur II (XB)** | Namco |
| 8 | **Midnight Club II (PS2)** | Rockstar |
| 9 | **Madden NFL 2004 (XB)** | EA |
| 10 | **Simpsons Hit & Run (XB)** | VUG |

SOURCE: BLOCKBUSTER, WEEK ENDING SEP. 28, 2003

## Top 10 Sales, All Systems

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **FF Tactics Adv. (GBA)** | Square Enix |
| 2 | **Madden NFL 2004 (PS2)** | EA |
| 3 | **ESPN Football (XB)** | Sega |
| 4 | **Tiger Woods 2004 (PS2)** | EA |
| 5 | **Soul Calibur II (GC)** | Namco |
| 6 | **Soul Calibur II (PS2)** | Namco |
| 7 | **SW Jedi Academy (PC)** | LucasArts |
| 8 | **WWE Raw 2 (XB)** | THQ |
| 9 | **ESPN Football (PS2)** | Sega |
| 10 | **Soul Calibur II (XB)** | Namco |

## Trend Spotter: Ninjas

Ninjas rock. Stormshadow (from *G.I. Joe*) once said, "A ninja does not use weapons. A ninja *is* a weapon!" Then he punched a tank that promptly fell apart. Now, ninjas are all over the place on PS2.

TMNT

I-NINJA

NINJA ASSAULT

TENCHU 3

GIANCARLO VARININI

## Work up the scrilla!

Dang, this is an expensive month to be a PS2 gamer! It sucks to be poor!

**63**

NUMBER OF PS2 GAMES SHIPPING IN NOVEMBER 2003

**$2,519.37**

COST TO BUY ALL OF THOSE GAMES

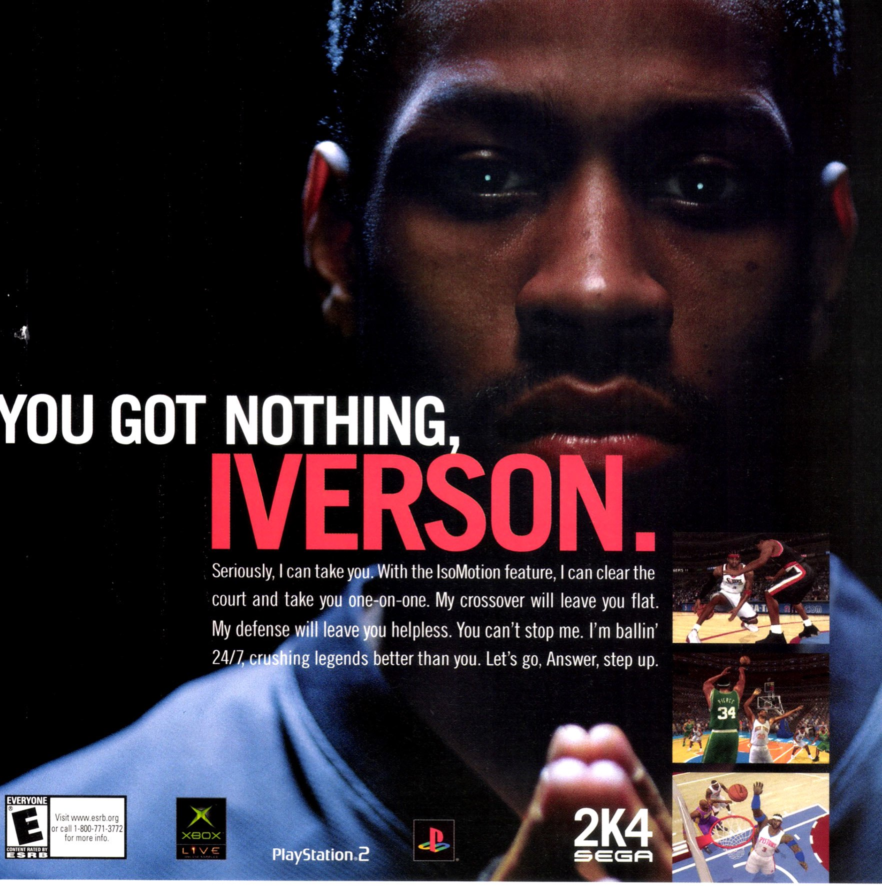
**$629.85**

AMOUNT YOU'D SPEND PER WEEK TO DO THAT

**$689.85**

TOTAL AMOUNT YOU'D SPEND IF YOU ONLY BOUGHT GAMES WE RECOMMEND THIS MONTH

SOURCE: US AND A CALCULATOR



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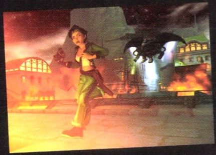

▶ 03

▶ 04

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05

06

07

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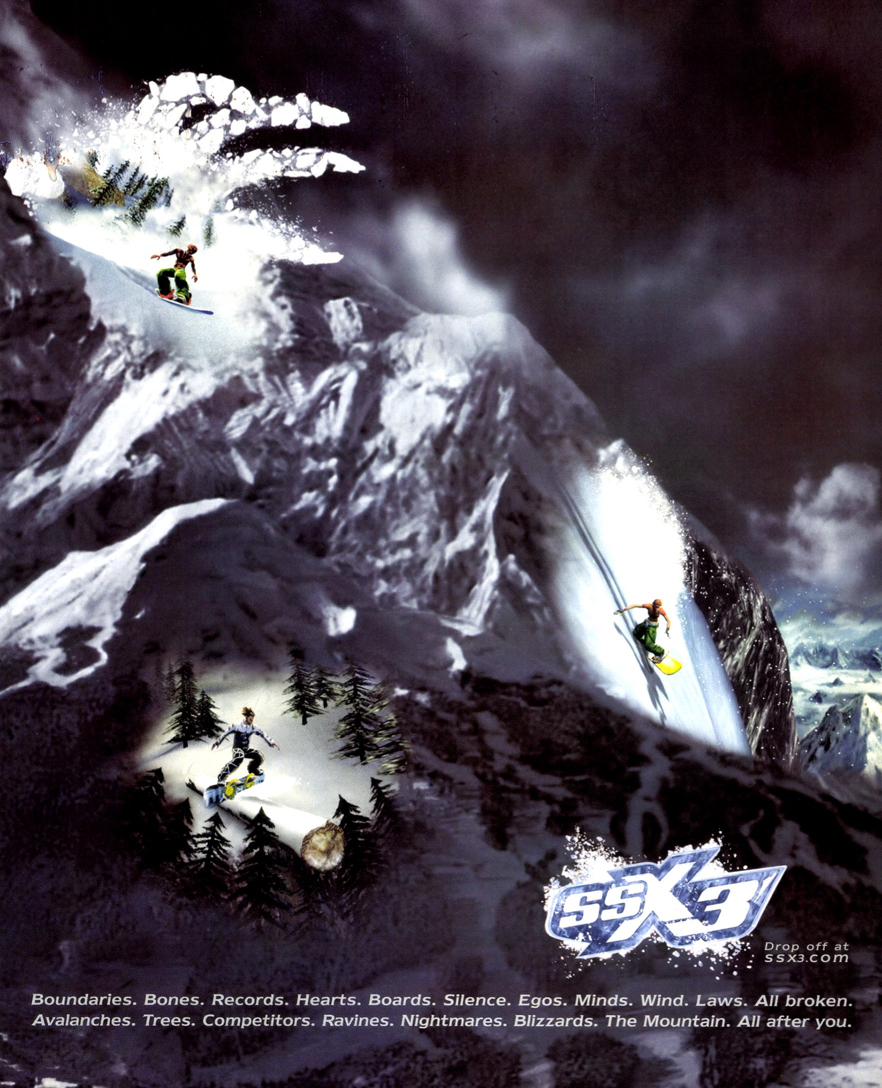

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